

**SYMBOLS, MYTHOLOGY**

**AND THE GODS**

**RUUD MUSCHTER**

1997  
copyright: author

muschter@home.nl  
<http://members.home.nl/muschter>

## CONTENTS

DEDICATION .....	4
INTRODUCTION .....	5
 PART I : SYMBOLS AND MYTHOLOGY .....	 9
1 THE (IM)MATERIAL IMPULSE .....	10
2 ASSOCIATION .....	16
3 CLASSIFICATION .....	24
4 STABILITY .....	31
 PART II : THE GODS .....	 38
5 PSYCHE .....	39
6 ANATOMY .....	42
7 VEHICLES .....	50
8 MARK OF ALLIANCE .....	62
 POSTSCRIPT .....	 72
 QUOTATION OF SOURCES .....	 73
 ENDNOTES .....	 75

## DEDICATION

Dedicated to my parents

## INTRODUCTION

### *the symbol*

This book contains an analysis of three connected elements. The first of them is the symbol. As somebody once described it, the symbol represents an idea; it is the embodiment of a thought and it reflects this thought in a succinct way. Symbols in their outward appearance form an exponent of the human mind, and come into existence on the basis of a number of psychical patterns. It is not easy to deduce from symbolical representations or from the behaviour of a nation what the nature has been of that which made the symbol come into being. There are good prospects however to more or less reduce this nature. With the creation of the symbol mechanisms are involved that determine how it comes into existence, what shape it assumes, how it is preserved and passed on, and if after many, sometimes thousands of years, it is still capable of divulging to our consciousness its derivation and its original, true meaning. Once the symbol has come into being, it is going to lead an independent life. It can also become a part of a group of symbols and acquire the shape of a story, in which every symbol is a bead on a chain so to speak. In a chain the position or presence of each individual bead does not strike the eye just like that; only the total presence of the chain inspires us or arouses our interest. Hence that in the many stories and myths we often recover the symbolical, component elements only after some investigation. Although the chain has been composed of many beads, it has grown into more than its constituent parts. The beads are not equal to the chain, but they are mutually related and each individually tells a story, just like the grains of sand in the desert tell something about the desert. To know them separately already means partly perceiving the whole.

Myths, rituals, masks, sculptures, paintings, drawings, petroglyphs and inscriptions are symbols of man with which he expresses and transfers his reality into a comprehensible language. Also intuitive impressions, logical thinking and coincidence are, as the resultants of the processes of our intellectual capacity, elements of that reality and can be 'ex-pressed' through associating. The more complex the imaginary or material realities that are to be expressed, the more man must make the most of the symbolical implements (his material), and the stronger the imaginative power of an outsider must be to recognize that the final outcome is the symbolizing of the original thought. Often the 'uninitiate' needs assistance with this and he will seek for somebody who can explain to him the real purport of the symbols that he has come across. The limitations of every material used are the cause of a symbol only becoming recognizable after explanation, or in combination with other symbols. These may vary from the receiving of keys, attributes or pointers that elucidate the symbol, to extensive - if necessary secret - instruction. Knowledge regarding reality is transferred within the family, within society, through educations and the media and via the so-called esoteric schools. Next we have the painter, literator or sculptor (in short the artist) and the philosopher or scientist, who through their special outlook make us aware of the incongruities in that reality. Through that, artists always occupy a special place within the social relationships. On the one hand they are endured, on the other hand esteemed, because time and again they bring up for discussion the accomplishments of the culture, with all the uncertainties that ensue from this for the observer.

Through looking for a prolonged time at the same patterns that again and again have been interpreted in the same manner, we have grown accustomed to a rather unquestioning acceptance of our culture, a culture of which historiography is a part. Through being accustomed we are able to stand firm in a world full of changing and overwhelming surprises, to

be sure, but it also leads to the loss of susceptibility, and it is susceptibility that could lead to the sharpening of our perception. If we want to learn to understand something of a symbol, it can best be done when we combine this endeavour with the receptivity of the artist.

It is not easy to come to a right understanding of ourselves and our world. After all as observers and interpreters we study and analyse that of which we ourselves are a part. We are amidst the things that we perceive, whereas we would like to be standing at a distance. As a matter of course psychological laws (which are timeless) come to the fore, because we are interested in the way the symbol comes into being, and because our investigation can best be done through analogy. Through these laws we can, without having to fall back on exact information about its initial time, yet try to answer the question whether the symbol changes, how it changes, whether we can still perceive its origin and, if so, by which ways this can be realized. In the following chapters we shall try to analyse and elucidate a number of aspects that are of interest with that.

### *the myth*

Our analysis of the symbols and the individual single elements (the beads therefore), can not be separated from the things that originate when these beads are joined into something of a higher order. Because he who discusses the chain also discusses the beads, and he who discusses the beads cannot get round telling something about the chain, we shall in our contemplation of the symbol also give attention to that into which it (sometimes unnoticed or gradually) develops: the myth. The symbol originates under the influence of laws, and such laws make themselves felt when myths are formed. For their part these also comply with certain laws, which are strongly related to those that apply for the symbols. In our argument therefore the dividing line between the concepts myth and symbol is vague. The symbol can be found in a myth or ritual, or develop itself in that direction. It can also maintain its individuality. Conversely, in the myth, which itself is a type of symbol, always symbols and sometimes rituals occur. Together they are forms of historiography, and subject to laws of nature which are nearly uniformous.

Within what kind of civilizations have the old myths been developed that are handed down to modern man? We all know that this have been societies of a very diverging character, settled in all parts of the world. Although one takes it for granted that the level of knowledge of the ancient cultures was lower the more they are distant from us in time, the indications that highly developed civilizations have lived on this earth in the past, are overwhelming.

When we strictly follow our propositions regarding the mechanisms which govern the coming into existence of symbols and myths, then the conclusion is acceptable that there have been high-quality earthly civilizations that accumulated a significant amount of technical knowledge and slowly or quickly declined. Vague remnants of this knowledge have been left to posterity: in mythology, but also elsewhere, like in art. As a rule the indications are of a symbolical nature.

When we translate the symbol back to its origin, which technique we shall engage in *infra*, we time and again chance upon high-quality, technical accomplishments. Mythological reports about those accomplishments can not be attributed to fantasy alone. A study of the history of the development of symbols can avail itself of multifarious comparisons. Because antiquity has left us many stories about strange atmospheric phenomena and deities that moved through the skies, we have not had to search long for a motive that can be the bearer of our study.

Although from the start we have realized that a relation can be made between on the one hand the propounded analyses and on the other hand the theories about extraterrestrial civilizations, we felt we ought to be reserved on that point. This required a compromise when approaching our subject. The stand that the development of earthly civilizations may have got an impetus in the past from extraterrestrial civilizations, is at this very moment subject of a great difference of opinion.

That a field is controversial can be caused by two factors. There are speculative matters involved that cannot fundamentally enough be inquired into, or the social ways of thinking do not allow exploration of the field concerned. In the sphere of extraterrestrial civilization the latter factor still carries a lot of weight. This does not alter the fact that, according to objective standards, it must be possible to make an inquiry into the possibility of such an impulse. And this inquiry is made indeed, for instance by exobiologists. As objective researchers we may not - within the framework of the field that we choose - exclude any possibility beforehand. The consequence is that we make discoveries and will have to draw conclusions that are not always agreeable to us. Without a scientific reason we may however not throw them overboard. It has proven to be possible to attribute the technical developments that seem to have arisen among early civilizations, to earthly civilizations, without us being driven back on the hypothesis that for such developments an extraterrestrial civilization has to be called in. No generally accepted proof has been produced for the existence of technically highly advanced human ancestors. On the other hand it is very likely - and certainly not impossible - that they have existed. When in myths there is talk of flying objects, then for it theoretically four explanations are conceivable:

- a) The stories about flying objects are based exclusively on the imaginative power of people in ancient times.
- b) The myths contain precognitive images of a development that has only got going in the twentieth century.
- c) Long ago there have actually been flying objects. Therefore they are originating from an ancient earthly civilization that must have been highly developed. A possibility that is still denied by many scientists, but gets more and more attention.
- d) The actually flying objects come from an extraterrestrial civilization. This possibility too exercises many minds, certainly after the recent commotion around Roswell in the United States. There a spaceship is said to have crashed in 1947 with which extraterrestrials are said to have been found. Recently a film has been released that claims to contain an autopsy on one of these beings.

When a number of characteristics of the flying objects, as mentioned in mythology, are analysed and compared with the description of some strange phenomena in the sky from our time, the main point of our opinion continually is: how does an observer transform the impressions that he gets, into a symbol or a story. After all it is the transformation phenomenon in all its shapes with which we have to deal daily. It is connected with elementary powers of the human mind: visualizing, contemplating, reasoning, the employing of logic, associating, intuition.

By means of a number of examples we shall examine how these human qualifications raise questions in regard to mythology. What determines the shaping of a myth? How does it occur to us after centuries? Where do we get our interpretation of history? Is, with this interpretation, the

working of the human mind more important than the facts?

### *the gods*

Miraculous accomplishments within a population can in the long term be attributed to gods. These can be newly created beings, but sometimes recent achievements are attributed to gods that had already for a long time earned their regular place in the community. With this, existing gods get allotted extra capabilities. This fact has played a part with our analysis. In the myths we time and again find a number of leading figures. In many cases, though not in all, these are beings with extraordinary gifts or powers. They have had an inspiring effect, and sometimes through the attributes that one ascribed to them they were allotted a divine position. Without wanting to put the leading figures in the myths in one category, it is in the light of our analysis justifiable to confine ourselves as much as possible to those who can be deemed to be preceptors and who are many a time designated with the term 'deities'. We use the term 'preceptors' whether beings are involved who have their origin only in the human psyche, or actually are existing, allochthonous or autochthonous teachers or influential persons.

The gods are, according to prevailing convictions, a symbolical representation of reality as soon as they appear in the myths, no matter who they were in reality: psychical characters (archetypes) or real people (alien visitors, avatars, teachers). From the way how the pantheon is discussed in the myths, often a realism speaks that justifies the question if the gods were frequently more than just the reproduction of a psychical reality. Would the inception of the gods in the consciousness of man lie in a mere immaterial, psychical impression and possibly form an archetype, or is this inception the appearing of an important hero with a material origin? Does a real, material and visible event underlie his appearing within the myths, and is he a person to whom often the most extraordinary powers and attributes are ascribed? To put it differently, can it be established when the pantheon is a product of the human imagination, or the reflex of reports from eyewitnesses who had dealings with important people from their own set or with important strangers?

Is there a way to find an answer to this question? From a consideration about symbol and myth it is a small step towards working out how the deity concept can end up in myths, and whether with the description of the deities an established pattern or a certain law can be discovered that one can lay down and record in a classification. With that the final element of this investigation has been outlined: the gods.



PART I:  
SYMBOLS AND MYTHOLOGY

## 1 THE (IM)MATERIAL IMPULSE

The most important observation that we can begin with, is that no symbols can be found in nature. Even natural shapes, like circles or triangles that we find in plants, are not yet symbols by nature. To be able to speak of a symbol we need a human choice, a conscious or unconscious decision to ascribe a special meaning to an entity that exists outside us. In fact of every reality to which we attribute significance it can be said that it is a symbol. Yet we do not consider everything of which man is aware, as such. Otherwise the world would consist of an almost unlimited amount of symbols. Seen from a philosophical or mystical point of view there is a case for that, but in everyday life we use the symbol concept a bit more sparingly. Besides that it must involve an entity to which man has attached a meaning, it is necessary that this meaning has some profundity. How much, cannot be specified or defined easily. A symbol gets significance when it implies a message. When the message would have to be transmitted without the interposition of the symbol, a great(er) number of words or images should have to be used for that, or a range of other symbols.

The symbol contains information that is compressed, but whether it is recognized depends on the understanding and the knowledge of the one who perceives the symbol, and sometimes on the effort of his will as well. In two different situations one and the same object can have a completely different meaning. A candle that is lit because there is a power failure has a definite function: it is a remedy to give light. No more and no less. When the same object is put in a different context, it can from an ordinary object become a symbol. Placed near a Christmas tree a candle symbolizes atmosphere, which evokes similar associations with the observer. Through this a reciprocity arises. The observer sees the candle and realizes that it is a means to enhance the atmosphere. It increases through it and the symbol has proven its value. It makes the candle become valuable in the future as a means to enhance the atmosphere, with which the cycle is closed. In traffic we attach significance to the concept 'triangle', that has a specific, symbolical contents, namely 'danger'. When we notice mysticism, we see that in it a totally different meaning has been attributed to the triangle, among other things of thesis, antithesis and synthesis. Both in traffic and in mysticism we give a meaning to the triangle. On the other hand we link no special intention to the triangular shapes that are found in a certain flower, hence that in that case we do not speak of a symbol. So it totally depends on the context of a reality or entity whether we speak of a 'symbol' in relation to that reality. Before we even reach the point of being able to attach a motive or intention to an entity that must be symbolized, we shall within our mind have felt the need to assign attributes or meanings to that entity. To put it differently, we first become aware of there being an object or a situation to which we attach a meaning, and only then do we make a conscious or unconscious effort, making a choice whether or not to transform reality into a symbol.

### *the immaterial impulse*

The kinds of primary perception from which a symbol, a myth or a ritual comes about, can be divided in an immaterial and a material impulse. With an immaterial impulse we think of archetypal contents that make an impression on the human mind and are not based on any material appearance. When man becomes aware of such an archetype, he can try to translate it into a material image. This translation can be a random, geometrical or human figure or a recognizable object, like when man shapes an image from clay or wood in response to an impression made on his brains by a material object. Subsequently the symbolism can be further

elaborated through adding, elucidation, deletion, further abstracting or merging with other symbols. Eventually it may come to it, that the original resultant of the archetype, namely the original impression that led to the symbol, is forgotten.

Under the touch of an artist too a symbol can undergo such deformations that in the long term it is no longer recognizable. The depicting of an abstraction like love can with more or less success take place by another abstraction or by something concrete. When one makes an attempt to symbolize such a notion, the odds are that the used symbol will be quickly lost or is only intuitively understood by an individual. It is debatable whether the designer himself always objectively realizes what prompts him to the forming of the symbol. If somebody later wants to reduce it to a cause, he will, when he lacks insight in the lineage, i.e. in the intentions of the designer, connect his own history to it. The most obvious way with this is, that a spiritual, psychological cause for the symbol is presumed, since a spiritual descent seems a logical choice. This presents the interpreter with less big problems than when he has to designate a material cause for the symbol, and for sure it is the safest way when the spirit of the times does not allow him to be critical. That a symbol is brought into use can find its immediate cause in a solitary individual having a psychical impression, or in several persons at the same time having such an impression. It can be ageless, or bound to the past, the present or the future. Sometimes it reveals something of the character and attachment of a nation, the place of this nation in the world (patriotic spirit), or its task (the striving after war or peace). The individual human being too can feel the need to fix a psychical impression and shape it into a symbol. Everything that occupies him in a spiritual or mental field and for which an outlet is desirable, may turn into a symbol. Because a psychical impression in essence is not tied to time and space, one should take into account that a symbol that has come into being under the influence of psychical factors, may have a precognitive or portentous nature. Such a symbol can be kept and be in vogue times after it has lost its prophecy character or when the predicted has become concrete. Conversely we can stumble across symbols of events that still have to take place.

### *the material impulse*

It goes without saying that a material cause may underlie a symbol. The arrival of strangers, the impact of a comet, an earthquake or some other impressive phenomenon in nature: it forms an important material event. The arrival of strange, civilized visitors may in the mind of primitive human beings herald a new era and mean a true initiation, even when the visitors keep themselves apart and confine themselves to making elementary contact. In antiquity many encounters have taken place between cultures of a different level. Such a rendezvous can be a traumatic experience. With that, the nature of the visitors and the visit is decisive, and also its consequences for the visited people. The material cause makes an impression on the brain and leads to the forming of the symbol. The further development of the symbol and the slowly becoming faint of the memory of its cause, takes place after this. History repeats itself: the original cause leads to the forming of a symbol, that already from its very beginning contains some up to many adaptations or concessions, because it never completely reflects the actuality.

Every symbol is subject to wear and all the time it is adapted, interpreted once more. It gets hidden meanings. In the long run from the oldest times almost only myths and symbols remain, and everybody who makes an attempt to reduction is bound to run up against big hindrances. When the origin of the discovered symbol cannot be found, one is, as we indicated before, inclined to devise an explanation of a spiritual or religious nature.

The immaterial causes (archetypes, thoughts, dreams) and the material causes (appearing strangers, knowledge about the achievements of civilizations), can get mixed and may end up in symbols in a condensed way. The difficulties that we meet with are innumerable when past the limits of time and imagination we want to identify an actual cause in old stories and descriptions. Weapons, tools, events, everything changes from day to day, and every time that we have come to the conclusion that we interpreted a mythological element in the right manner, more explanations appear to exist. By putting together the fragments of knowledge man can try to come to the solution of these complicated problems, or shed light on them. The more versions of a myth are going round, the more difficult it becomes to recognize the right one. Is there one meaning? We must take into account that every myth, no matter how unequivocally it may have started, gradually gets a hidden meaning.

### *symbol as the vehicle of history*

The changeability of the myth puts our entire historiography in a unique light. Our points of connection with the past for a considerable part consist of symbols that have been passed on to us from antiquity. Sometimes they consist of images, sometimes of drawings or paintings, sometimes they are preserved in the form of folk tales. There are cultures where a specific symbol keeps returning. It is dominant and is found in more modes of expression at the same time: in material shapes and besides as a theme in mythology. It does not always at once betray its meaning to an outsider, especially not when he is born thousands of years after the forming of the symbol. What keeps us busy with respect to the symbols are among other things the clues about the existence of former cultures that had high-quality technical knowledge at their disposal. The barrier that we have to take, is that with the interpreting of unknown quantities we must rely on the remnants of what once has been. We interpret from our background, which is a dynamic one.

A symbol is a form of transference of history. The history of human thought and human civilization. That there is also a symbolical transferring in addition to the actual transferring of data we can take for granted. It is interesting to investigate from which source a symbol can arise and what we may expect to discover when we analyse it. In the past there have been many civilizations that with ups and downs have acquired knowledge. After the apogee of their flourishing, they left to us the relics of their culture, as among other things kept in the esoteric schools, in symbolism and in myths. Even these days myths and symbols are made, and not only by the latest primitive societies that this earth can still boast. Even in highly developed, technical civilizations this process takes place constantly. Our civilization has followed paths that often fall beyond the scope of our comprehension. As a rule we think of a slow progress via cave-dwellers, to whom in our imagination we attribute a development that has passed off by established courses. Although we hardly know by which ways humanity evolves, it is too easily presumed that it is known how primitive man in hundreds of thousands, if not millions of years, has become the being that we know now. Lacunas or strange twistings in the line of development are filled up preferably by linear theories. That human civilization may have gone off with abrupt leaps does not fit in this concept. That is incorrect. In his activities modern civilized man does not have to build straightforwardly on the activities of his predecessors. In the course of the development of civilization many revolutions in human behaviour and thinking may have taken place. Through it, man in his old condition becomes unrecognizable or less recognizable for modern man, which obstructs the making of a good reconstruction of history.

### *how myths picture reality*

Myths are passed on in the form of written or verbal reports, or hybrids of these two. There is more than one approach with which they can be investigated, and in practice one will try to carry out that operation with a multiple of principally differing lines of approach. One can grapple with myths in an ideological, rational, religious, ethnological, psychological, mystical and historical way. All these approaches have common grounds, but cannot guarantee us a definite or reliable interpretation, save there being an abundance of arguments for it at hand. The researcher must at least take the myth seriously and not take his departure from a predisposed point of view. The next quotation we extract from John Kooy:

"They who are responsible for the coming into being of the myths have not devised them or made them up, but have seen, experienced, gone through them - in the final analysis therefore: perceived (...) them. The designation 'poetical explanation of nature' cannot possibly satisfy us. The creators of the myths (...) were the scientists and their myths were the embodiment of knowing, of the science of those days. Were they not, as every real science, related to reality? - be it the reality of the primitives, which of course was a different one than ours", according to John Kooy.<sup>1</sup>

The following, different note comes from professor Dr. P. Westheim. He says that myth is the interpretation of reality, and that in myth man finds the explanation of all existence and of all events. That which is perceived by the senses, is ostensible, ambiguous, problematic. In regard to the riddle, which we call reality, the ostensible is a spiritual orientation, is Westheim's opinion. Just like there is a mythical thinking, one could also speak of a mythical seeing. For the impressions that it must express, it must develop its own language. For man myth is the reality; his art is a mythical realism, says Westheim.<sup>2</sup>

From the account of Kooy speaks an honest attempt to go back to the human being hidden behind the myth. The key of the riddles stored in the myths, will have to be given to us by that primitive or on the contrary very civilized human from the past. We differ from man in bygone days, because our fundamental ability to create myths has changed. We make films, write articles and books, perform plays, but is what remains really tomorrow's mythology? It strikes that we think that our ancestors only managed to make up stories and did not render history in their myths.

We are not refractory to discover what is hidden behind this apparent senseless ancestral talk. From time to time there are developments to awaken us, like Schliemann's wish to discover the mythological city of Troy. There are individuals who have not yet lost the contact with the past, with our case history and with our character. They are courageous enough to cut the sod of promising soil. They are the scientists who makes history, instead of being made by it.

In fact Westheim goes along with Kooy a substantial way. Yet between their two views there is a subtle difference. Westheim, whose interpretation cannot easily be decoded through the rethoric used, confirms that the myth is an interpretation of reality. Yet for him perhaps it means that it is more a matter of the extrasensory or physical reality seeing its contents translated into the myth, than that the myth, once it exists, may be taken for a serious reflection of a physical or spiritual reality. Beside it there is the point of view of Kooy who a priori puts, that myths are to be considered an interpretation of a genuine reality, that is, of a historical event. Kooy sees the

mythmaker as a human being like us: the human who can lay down in a story - and with this prepare the birth of a myth - all the impressions, sensory and spiritual ones, that approach him. Westheim on the other hand seems to indicate that the mythmaker has transferred a vision or an experience into the shape of a story, without conversely it being possible to gather a tangible reality from the myths.

It is the old controversy that occurs on the notion reality. Both writers talk about reality, whereas the one means with it actual psychical or physical phenomena (Kooy) and the other a reality of a rather metaphorical psychical or physical nature (Westheim). When Westheim speaks about the human for whom myth is reality, he does not seem to mean that this human in the myth embodies the things that have taken place in life in a visible manner. He rather seems to indicate that man is so interwoven with the contents of the myth, which myth may be of a historical or other nature, that it becomes alive for him and as such becomes reality. We can endorse that the sensory world is apparent, ambiguous and problematic. Through making myths man tries to stop this uncertainty. That his attempts are not always succesful is shown from the fact that many myths remain as obscure and ambiguous as the sensory world from which they are said to have escaped. Creating a myth or a symbol, be it to understand the physical reality or the psychical reality, be it to escape it, just remains replacing the one reality by the other. Replacing the extensiveness of the knowable world by the vastness of the mythological world, added to the haziness of world and mythology and the continued existence of knowledge in (small) groups, makes it plausible that the replacing of an actual event by a symbol takes place with the purpose to get a grip on situations.

By making a symbol one so to speak redoes the creative process, so that one becomes a ruler oneself over that which has been perceived. When the obtaining of power and mastery of the cognizable life is a goal, it must be assumed that also an extraordinary event, for instance a visit from the one to the other civilization, is a cause to such a recreation, since the unusual that one observes in an alien civilization asks for control. The myth and the symbol are sometimes identical; this is the case when they reflect the same situation, transferred into analogies, through which man is becoming master of the situation. It is not fair to expect less developed peoples to arrange their analogies in such a manner that the more developed peoples understand them right away. Nor is it fair to make out on the basis of the being undeveloped of a nation that the contents of all their myth material is founded on imagination. Myths may contain as much truth as our newspaper reports. It is lazy to suppose that man from earlier centuries was a dreamer, knew no seriousness and only left behind concocted stories to those who came after him. For this is what one wants to say when one maintains approaching the myths from the old point of view. But if we want to consider them as the real reports of genuine events, we are confronted with startling observations. With the Angami-Nagas the following story has been kept alive:

"The sky is really smaller than the earth. In the beginning the sky said to the earth: 'You are so big, I cannot cover you, wrinkle up your feet.' So the earth wrinkled to let the sky cover it, and that is why there are hills and valleys in the earth while the sky is smooth. But even by wrinkling, all the earth could not get covered, and one place got left outside. This place is called Whedzura. There is no sky in Whedzura, and so they never see the sun there, but they have a stick which is very precious by which they tell the time. And the light there is like a sort of moonshine. The air in Whedzura is very strong and so people get old very quickly. They marry off their children one year and cannot even recognize them the next."

According to researcher J.H. Hutton<sup>3</sup>, the Angami-Nagas thereupon state, that a man must

already leave at birth to be able to arrive there in time during his life. In this short fragment we see in succession references to the vacuum in the cosmos, an advanced means for the computation of the time, a special kind of light, radiation, the theory of relativity in relation to ageing processes, and a journey of about the speed of light, plus the turning back.

The biggest handicap is our own thinking. It is so culturally determined, that we cannot dissociate ourselves from it when we study the myths of another people. Western man frames a story in words that only he can fully grasp; in the east it is done differently. Therefore it is not right to find the myths of any nation transparent from the very start and to dispose of them as figments of the imagination. One must try to see the myths through the eyes of those in whose time and culture they have originated. It is not correct to characterize uncomprehended cultural legacy as backward or barbarian. The objective point of departure of the investigation in this field must be, that all knowable events, so the physical realities and the dreams and fantasies, can be transformed - through patterns - into myths or symbols. We would almost say that all events are eligible to be shaped into myths, with which it must be considered that in former days certain matters may have been more important than they would be nowadays, even with one and the same nation. The receiving of the first maize, the phenomena thunderstorm and storm, being born and dying, the visit from and to alien cultures, it may all have led to the creation of myths and it has.

## 2 ASSOCIATION

### *enduring effect*

The events around us always result in a reaction in our mental consciousness. One of its earliest forms is association. The result of associating can be the creating of a symbol, that never is really universal, for every principle can be represented in infinitely many ways and every symbol for its part evokes new interpretations and associations in our mind. This mental reaction commences inadvertently. Nowadays we associate our experiences with completely different things than one did hundreds or thousands of years ago. Compared to what is at the disposal of the industrialized human being, the association aids were different in bygone days. In this respect there are in our time still many substantial differences between the various nations. The significance that we attach to myths and symbols is dependent on the composition of our association material. The knowledge that many mythological material is preserved as to its essence, in addition to the knowledge that even the essence sometimes can only be understood when one is both the fellow countryman and the contemporary of the keepers of the mythology, places us in a dilemma.

Sometimes the symbol is recognizable regardless of time and place, or unrecognizable for the masses but understandable for an initiate. There are rational persons who consider their knowledge of a cultural asset to be singular (an asset that may be obvious for us), and therefore protect it with mysteriousness and symbols. These persons too we consider to be initiates. Or are the things protected that we consider to be common knowledge, but of which only he who stands close to the source understands that it is something very special? That the symbol is incomprehensible for the masses does not yet make it incomprehensible for insiders. When it is known beforehand that it must be recognizable for a long time, for several nations and in several countries, it is drafted as universally as possible. That which is understood by a small group of people, can also be understood by a larger group of people, provided that those outsiders get the chance to be initiated in the matter. The interpretation of symbols requires imaginative power, because the keys that give entrance to their meaning could get lost for us. The era in which somebody lives determines the kind of evoked images. In spite of this an attempt can be made to unriddle the veiled things, by carefully studying the laws that have led to the enciphering of the information. Points of departure to deal with this are among other things the association aids, the ways associations are made and the role of the person who transforms knowledge into symbols. Inevitably a symbol depicts several things at the same time, but a single word of the person who is familiar with the original meaning may be sufficient to make as well others grasp the meaning.

The purpose of the symbol is to give a durable expression of something transitory or untranslatable. When choosing the symbol one is governed by the associations that come up instantly. In fact they have the best relation with the objects, personages or events that one has perceived. This need not give the best transferable symbols. When we see something new, but also when we perceive something familiar and well-known, we constantly associate: every object calls up the memory of an object that is identical with it, or that has a strong, almost magical connection with it.

### *memory*



When seeing the simplest utensils we associate and classify. With minimal means we achieve a maximum of identification and empathy with the qualities of that which has been expressed. An advantage of this is, that it helps us recognizing a threatening danger. The constantly comparing protects us against bodily risks and shows instinctive cautiousness. In life we will not all the time exhaustively and consciously measure what the unknown evokes exactly, unless it has a shape that cannot be expressed in words and has little connection with a known and registered image in the mind.

In normal life the human brain does not analyse extensively. If it would, we would unnecessarily run a great risk. When we see a balk coming down above our head, we will not quite ask ourselves what object that may be, why it comes down and if it constitutes a hazard in its position. At the time that we would have an answer to all those questions it would be too late. In reality a fraction of a second is enough to let us know what something is and whether it is detrimental. This knowledge comes to us from the memory. In such situations it appears how quickly we reproduce data from this memory and act according to it. When we are frightened by something that is not at all dangerous or dismal, but equivalent to something terrifying, then this convincingly proves how quickly the associating takes place and how much we are dependent on our supply of memories, sometimes even owe our lives to it. When man thinks, he associates. His associations are active in a limited field, namely the field that he can cover with his knowledge and his memory. From his memory, if he wants to classify an unknown object, he seeks for elements of equal standing, and from them chooses the most resembling element. The moment he sees an object, be it known or unknown, images from his memory, of matters that are tied in with it, are brought to the fore by him. The symbols that come into being as the result of associating must be recognizable, at least for the one who has put them together. Otherwise the symbol would lack the only function that is inherent in it, namely the compact reproducing of a thought. It is a matter of as many as possible identification points, resemblances.

The actual associating happens as an almost autonomous action of the mind. Almost automatically we delve into our memory and from it something is brought to the surface. Not surprising that Tibetans with the landing in 1948 of an aeroplane in Ladakh brought along hay. They mistook the aeroplane for a beast and wanted to feed it. He who later hears their myths will undoubtedly learn about a big bird that descended with a lot of noise, for that is what they associated the appliance with. Symbols evoke memories of things that are stored in our mind and that possess characteristics of the symbol. There is however talk of a certain one-way traffic. The symbol works like a fyke. From every object and every situation a symbol or myth can be constructed, but he who has arrived at the final product can not go back just like that to see the original point of departure. When looking back, we lack the information needed to come to completely sound conclusions. Information that will only become available in the future and yet is laid down in an ancient myth or an ancient symbol, occupies a special place. Such information is staring us in the face, but we do not recognize it. It concerns precognitive knowledge or knowledge that has got lost and waits to be rediscovered in the future, and of which only the symbols remained that wait to be unveiled. When we could show the symbol of an atom to somebody from the year 200, how could he come to the conclusion that it concerns an atom? He associates with the assistance of the supply of objects, situations and knowledge from the year 200 and before. In a word, he consults his memory and relates the shown symbol to his memory images.

Perhaps our memory must still wait for centuries before we know what the meaning is of scribbles on clay tablets, or of insignificant looking figures on rock faces. Inscriptions and objects bring us a message. Depictions from the past are sometimes no longer understood, because the knowledge regarding their use has disappeared. Civilizations that equalled us in development and lost their knowledge again, may hundreds of years ago have made special, technical discoveries. Objects from a time far before the beginning of our era may manifest a very sophisticated technology without us being aware of it. Some cause could have led to the loss of that technology, while the objects or depictions remained to exist. There are matters that with the elapsing of the years become more and more difficult to interpret, because the recollection of the phenomena from which they originate weakens more and more. Suppose that an object is made in the tenth century before Christ and that the technology on which it is founded is lost very soon after that. When the object passes into disuse and is recovered centuries later without the procedure and the accompanying principles having been rediscovered, it may for a long time remain unclear what its purpose was. Rediscovery of the method of manufacturing might fail to occur until the thirtieth century after Christ. In the intervening centuries the object remains uncomprehended. Something of the kind has occurred in the Middle East, where on a museum loft objects were found again which were put aside as unclassifiable, but which seemed to be batteries of many centuries old.

### *projection*

Technology beguiles us into projecting on old depictions - by means of associating - our knowledge of contemporary objects. An embellishment on a figurine or incorporated in a petroglyph depicting a human being, may have an ornamental function or suggest the presence of a technical appliance on the depicted body. When we pay attention solely to the way how such a finding is analysed, how then must we interpret a prehistoric depiction of a human shape wearing a kind of wristwatch? The watch as we know it, is the final link in a chain of inventions. It has not come into existence from one day to the next but found its way to completion through preceding grades: the manufacturing of sundial, sandglass, water clock, pendulum clock. It is not certain whether earlier civilizations transformed their discoveries of the laws of nature into technical appliances in the same way as we do. One and the same physical principle can very well be applied in more than one way. Furthermore the machinery can get a different dimension from what we are accustomed to. When in days of old one would have come to a timepiece of the minimal proportions of our wristwatch, it is not yet certain that it was thus designed that it was serviceable as a wristwatch. One may have given the timepiece a completely unique form, while it was carried and used in a different way than around the wrist. Is the wrist the most appropriate for carrying a timepiece? Yes, when we talk about the watches known to us. When the timepiece functioned and was assembled in a unique way, the answer may be no. In a civilization where technology has taken such a flight that one has wristwatches at one's disposal or can produce similar ingenious machines, there may have been developed other machinery that serves man; machinery designed to be carried around the wrist, though not being wristwatches. The projecting makes visible once more how dependent we are with analysing symbols and myths. We continually look back in our memory images and consider the thus found concepts the measurement of our interpretations.

### *interchange*

Andrew Sharp, writer in the field of prehistory and history of the Pacific Ocean, says:

"The compilation of a number of resemblances between arts and crafts, stone monuments and customs, cannot of itself establish whether one of two cultures came from the other directly, or both from a third area, or whether some of their common features were developed independently because of similar environments.<sup>4</sup>"

By analogy with what Sharp adduces, namely that a similarity between two cultures does not imply that they have a common basis or have originated from each other, we can put that also myths and symbols not always have to have the common basis from which they apparently arise. Nor can it be established just like that whether they on the contrary have come into being independently. There is no infallible criterion with which we can establish whether the one symbol has connections with the other, and if so, in how far and on what points. Is it the nature of the similarities? When in two cultures a fundamental, triangular symbol is designed, then the fact that both cultures make a triangle does not imply that they have interchanged ideas about it. It is tempting to ascribe to coincidence a similarity of symbols within two cultures, when it concerns such a noncomplex similarity. Tempting, because it is hard to establish whether a simple cultural element has arrived at more than one culture through interchange. The falling back on coincidence is then a way out of this problem. When it concerns a complicated, less fundamental symbol, the chance that an interchange is involved is bigger. However, a somewhat more complicated invention or artful expression that is also found elsewhere, cannot always be ascribed to the mutual interchange of experiences. It may have arisen independent of a similar expression in another region. An achievement that is complicated may therefore be found in several cultures without there having been an interchange of information. Distinct unique symbols that are in use with two nations at the same time, might indicate an interchange, but what is unique? Is it something that has never before been devised in our community and of which we suppose that other cultures, alien to us, for that reason certainly never can have devised it? That which in our complex culture comes into existence on the basis of and as the production of earlier developments, may look like a production of another culture, but that other product might well build on a development all its own. A different culture need not be a perfect projection of ours. From that conclusion we must practise caution regarding conclusions about the cause of the similarities. A common source or actual relation between the cultures cannot be assumed at once, for it is often accepted on the basis of projection. Our opinion about how cultures arise, tells more about ourselves than that it is the right instrument to chart the body of thought of another culture.

A symbol can sometimes be related to a series of other symbols, which can make the conclusion more acceptable that there has been an interchange of information. This for example is the case when unambiguous information is available about the processes that in different regions have led to equal cultural expressions, so when the nations involved have deeper lying causes in common. There is some point in asking questions like: What direct use did one have of a symbol? Was there a reason to assume that use and means were identical with both the one and the other nation and that these aspects occurred to the same extent? It is always useful to search for the laws that govern the creating of symbols, like the associative process. But this is not sufficient to help proving the interchange of symbols, nor to prove the contrary, for although the capability to associate is a fundamental human characteristic, it may be called forth in different ways by nations, to convert reality into symbols and myths - with their uncountable combination possibilities. Apart from that, the conclusion that information has been interchanged, is in practice partly determined by the number of times that identical symbols are found, plus the way

these symbols may be called identical, and their relative complexity. So in theory a multiple of variables complicates the demonstrating of the interchange of ideas, and yet interchange is sometimes made plausible, on the basis of the becoming available of many indications that complement each other.

### *synchronicity*

There are indications that analogous cultural attainments, including exclusive symbols, in different cultures develop through nonphysical interchange, for instance through telepathy. The materialization that we are referring to, is, when it happens almost at the same time, a form of synchronicity. Every now and then man seems to be open to equally attuned minds, who simultaneously come to concordant thoughts or discoveries. This attunement takes place daily on a small and on a large scale. Examples of it can be found in several sciences, when the point in time of important discoveries is involved or the discovery of physical principles, like when two scientists at almost the same time publish a sensational discovery. This working of the consciousness, with which the thoughts of two or more persons are associated, can even be found in the cultural and technical development of nations that need not have heard of each other's existence. In a sense it makes impure the picture that we have of the history of our ancient symbols. It influences our vision regarding symbols of which one assumes that they have been interchanged.

When thoughts can indeed narrow the limitations of time and space, a not insignificant problem has been added to the already many that accompany the investigation into the origin or interchange of symbols. Interchange could then be traced back to both the physical and psychical transmission of information, which leads us to the third possibility, with which we enter a field about which science at this moment reports little concrete, as less as about the transformation of thoughts. The interchange of information can, other than in the case of physical interchange or direct transmission of thoughts between persons, in theory go through a third, nonpersonal source.

When information is interchanged physically, the one person hands on data to the other through the customary communication channels. With the transmission of thoughts the interchange takes place incorporeal. As a phenomenon this is remarkable already. The mentioned third possibility, so the one with which an impersonal source is involved, implies that an idea simultaneously originates within the mind of the separate individuals involved, when they do not contact each other but contact a kind of universal, psychical, collective consciousness and derive their inspiration from it.

When we follow this hypothesis, it may partly explain why in antiquity certain analogous cultural expressions have been found on different locations. This is more difficult to demonstrate than physical interchange and just as difficult as proving the transference of thoughts. Certain images or symbols unequivocally show their physical descent or influence, for instance when in a non-Greek country a vase is found on which Greek soldiers are portrayed, with a detailed depiction of dressing and weapons. Finds of that nature are culture bound and bear the unmistakable mark of the nation that created them and of the physical interchange (read: relocation) of the basic idea involved. They are no abstractions that are free from time and place. They express the characteristics of a nation (in this case the Greek one) too specifically to have come about coincidentally or through the transference of thoughts or the 'cosmic archive'. For this the images are too detailed. It becomes a different matter when in separate areas symbols are discovered that resemble each other and have little to do with the nature of, or the

historic events within both nations, but are of a general or geometrical nature and have no racial traits. Such an affinity in symbols may have come about coincidentally, be the result of physical interchange of information or of transference of thoughts, or reveal the working of a general idea, that at about the same moment in history was taken up by a number of persons and was materialized: the idea of the cosmic archive or the 'Akasha Chronicles'. Whatever the case may be, at set intervals the derivation of symbols cannot be established unequivocally.

### *precognition and message of doom*

It is difficult to understand a symbol that reflects knowledge that has got lost. It is still more difficult to grasp a symbol that in the past has been designed on the basis of precognition of future phenomena, when those phenomena even now are in the future, so that nothing is present in our time to associate the symbol with. This is the case when the symbol has come into being as the result of the observer trying to name psychical images, precognition, with the aid of images that out of necessity stem from his own time. As long as the foreseen event has not yet really manifested itself, the 'key' that fits the symbol remains untraceable for centuries, if need be. Of this there are interesting examples. The way the symbol originates, forms the most intriguing aspect with this. Whether tangible things have been foreseen, like objects or technical machinery, or more abstract phenomena like events, comes after that.

In the 17th century the Prophetess of Prague rendered a vision as follows:

"Humanity is impertinent. It wants to score off God. Mercilessly it sows a mushroom, the seed of which is thrown from heaven on the earth. Fear becomes great and it reaches towards the clouds, and the mushroom overshadows much land. But the mushroom is poisonous and thousands die a heartrending death.<sup>5</sup>"

The figurative language used here of the mushroom could in our days not be replaced by a better one. Only in our time one manages to associate it with an atomic explosion. Earlier generations could neither translate the symbol nor assess it at its true value.

Another vision is passed down by the Prophetess as follows:

"They build a tower from steel and water and believe that they can conquer heaven with it. The people will have to pay a heavy penalty for their foolhardiness.<sup>6</sup>"

It often happens that people who have prophetic abilities at their disposal are inspired by a religious power; they are religiously committed so to speak. Sometimes the prophecy cannot be dissociated from a message of salvation or of a message of doom. Predictions, like that about the rocket and the foolhardiness that man displays by building it, often contain a warning for calamity to be expected. At any rate, the prophet relates the prediction to a warning. On the other hand it may imply that he takes the view that man may explore no farther than allowed by the prevailing religions or conventions in the prophet's time. Everything that seems to go above that, seems for him to be equal to sacrilege or foolhardiness. His fear for that he passes on to his audience, in the form of admonitions. A next possibility is that the prophet, seeing what man tries to achieve, comes to think that the undertaken works must lead to a disastrous outcome when the social disposition does not change. The prophet asks himself the question whether inventions are morally sound and whether they do not disturb the continued existence of human

peace. Many nations have been inundated with impressions that they could not cope with. Besides prophecies, with which they realized in their brains images that had not yet been revealed in a material sense, they had to handle sensory and actual impressions that they could not explain and fit in in the scala of daily impressions. This is why they had to make an appeal to their active imaginative powers, in order to be able to classify the new perceptions and to hand them on to fellow tribesmen. The normal process of associating new things with objects from their memory supply was satisfactory, but sometimes had nasty results. American Indians got into a state when they saw a steamboat for the first time. In the absence of a better description the vessel was called 'medicine'. On board was the expert on Indians George Catlin. He recorded:

"We had on board one twelve-pound cannon and three or four eight-pound swivels, which we were taking up to arm the Fur Company's Fort at the mouth of Yellow Stone, and at the approach to every village they were all discharged several times in rapid succession, which threw the inhabitants into utter confusion and amazement. Some of them laid their faces to the ground and cried to the Great Spirit. Some shot their horses and dogs, and sacrificed them to appease the Great Spirit, whom they conceived was offended.<sup>7</sup>"

### *rhetoric*

When a symbol must be established, the human capability of argumentation and association is called in. This is also the case when the symbol is analysed and converted into its cause. What must we do when there is no good explanation of the symbol in store? To somebody who in everyday life is forced to make a choice in this field, the course is open to continue analysing and associating, or to just give it up. In science, when confronted with an old or unknown symbol, or a symbol of which the origin is uncertain, one fairly often moves to explanations of a religious or magical nature. Then the symbol is explained preferably relegating to fertility-, initiation- or funeral rites. In short, speculating about the meaning of a symbol that is difficult to interpret, often leads to theories that lie in a religious field. Also one often falls back on rethorical descriptions. We shall illustrate this on the basis of the next example. In Palenque in Mexico the Temple of Inscriptions is located. In this temple a grave has been discovered. The surface of the slab covering the grave is embellished with a beautiful relief and is an example of a great craftsmanship. For a while the depiction has been interpreted in a classical manner. According to the latest opinions, in the depicted figure a creature can be seen that is situated on a technical appliance and is occupied with the handling of all kinds of levers and treadles. Meanwhile still more interpretations have been added to the range of existing ones: classical next to revolutionary. One of the people who provided the stone with a classical comment, is Dr. G. Bushnell. He argues that the site shows the interior of a tomb with a pseudo-vault in which a stone is found with a stylized tree and a falling figure at the foot.<sup>8</sup> He therefore says that the depicted figure is falling. This is also asserted by Dr. Alberto Ruz, another expert. On the other hand, with a detailed photograph of the same slab Dr. Bushnell indicates in another book written by him:

"It [the relief; RM] shows a reclining figure from which sprouts a tree or plant.<sup>9</sup>"

This is an important distinction: in his one vision the human being falls from the tree; in the other the tree sprouts from the human being. Dr. Alberto Ruz interprets the depiction as follows: On the stone in question he sees a human being, surrounded by astronomical signs, which

symbolize the heavens: the spatial bounds of the earth of the people, and the house of the gods, in which the unchanging course of the stars marks the unrelenting rhythm of time. Ruz continues to say, that the human rests on the earth, portrayed as a grotesque head with gloomy features, as the earth is a monster that devours all life. And when the backwards lying human seems to fall, it is because it is inherent in his fate to fall to the ground, to the land of the dead, says Ruz.<sup>10</sup>

Several scholars think that the stylized figure seems to fall. With this they depart from the idea that the short side of the slab is the basis. A logical line of reasoning for the human who is accustomed to read an epitaph while standing at the shortest side of the stone. This indicates which complications arise when one associates from one's own cultural background. It is no law of the Medes and Persians that an inscription must be read from the foot. If one takes the longest side as a basis, a totally different picture of the meaning of the stone comes to light. When Bushnell and Ruz looked at the stone from the vision that it concerned a tombstone, they took up a habitually place with that, in view of their own cultural background. Automatically, proceeding from their own culture, they tried to explain the unique heritage of another people. When we take up a position at the long side of the stone, we see a figure that not at all falls or slants, but on the contrary sits, or stoops forward. Ruz attached the following concepts to the stone: 'The monster that devours all life'; 'the falling to the land of the dead'; 'the unchanging course of the stars'; 'the unrelenting rhythm of time'. Through his use of flowery language, the employing of rhetoric, he has given his interpretations a great deal of their value. A theory is quicker accepted when it is presented in an explicitly poetical or rhetorical wrapping. He who avails himself of this means, discusses the role of the symbol in blossomy phrasings, so that the actual truth and value of the symbol is pushed into the background to such an extent that in fact it is no longer under discussion. The person who develops the rhetorical explanation or the corresponding theory, may be of good faith. The moving to a rhetorical explanation may be the result of the unconsciously sensing of the inadequacy of one's own theory or the absence of other theories. That also the authenticity of a finding is stressed through rhetoric, has been demonstrated by the art critics who at the time judged the forged paintings ascribed to Johannes Vermeer. Their lyrical, rhetorical descriptions initially seemed sufficient to lend the pictures involved the aura of authenticity. The rhetorical explanation is often accepted, but is ungainsayably stupefying. Flowery language suggests that an interpretation is true, at any rate beyond all discussion. Of course a finding can be explained in more than one way, but an interpretation can only be taken serious when it has been underpinned with arguments. Rhetorical linguistic usage seems no legitimation to omit arguments, and it is no suited replacement for it.

### 3 CLASSIFICATION

#### *actuality and design*

As became visible in the preceding chapters, symbols come into being on the basis of a physical or psychical impulse. The way they are composed is in its turn determined by association. Finally the symbol will get a more or less transferable form. This form has a connection with its source, this is, with the event that has been the cause for the forming of the symbol. When the symbol has only just been called into existence and is still new, the observer has earlier access to the source from which it was composed than when the symbol under the influence of time has undergone changes.

Through metaphorization, a form of metamorphosis, the original quality can become so blurred or remoulded that with the passage of time it is no longer comprehended without the use of aids. Designing a symbol or bringing it into use, is a means, an attempt to comprehend, know and control reality. When reality is odd, like when a primitive tribe becomes acquainted with the achievements of a developed civilization that lies further away from it technically, one has no choice but transmitting that reality by using a symbol, a reflection of that reality. In later times wearing leads to it that a *primaeval* meaning is attributed to the symbol; a meaning that the symbol originally did not have. Through this attributing we obstruct our own view on the cause of the symbol. An example to illustrate this complicated situation: An expedition takes with it as part of its equipment a small, round, plastic box that serves as a radio. The native population that is visited by the expedition knows no plastic and no radios, and compares the curious little box and the material that it is made of, with a costly stone with magical qualities. After the departure of the expedition the special box is kept in the memory of the eyewitnesses, who still associate it with a special stone. Until later generations this view is passed on, with which a cult comes into being surrounding a stone, chosen for that reason after a long period of time. After many generations the origin of the cult has become thoroughly dissolved, but the ritual stone is still kept and remains the centre of rites and myths. The keepers of the stone inform the interested parties or other initiates of the tribe, that the original forefathers possessed a costly stone of which the present stone is a depiction. So, the opinion lives that the original of the present symbolical stone has been an authentic stone, but that conclusion is erroneous. From the link of elements that determine the symbol the real basis of the myth, the plastic box, has disappeared completely; the present stone symbolizes an original stone, but that stone has never existed. This process can be broken through when in the society where the metaphor has finally arrived, new developments take place in the field of historical science. Now, what are the broad outlines, the *stadia*, along which (as we have examined hitherto) the symbol comes into existence?

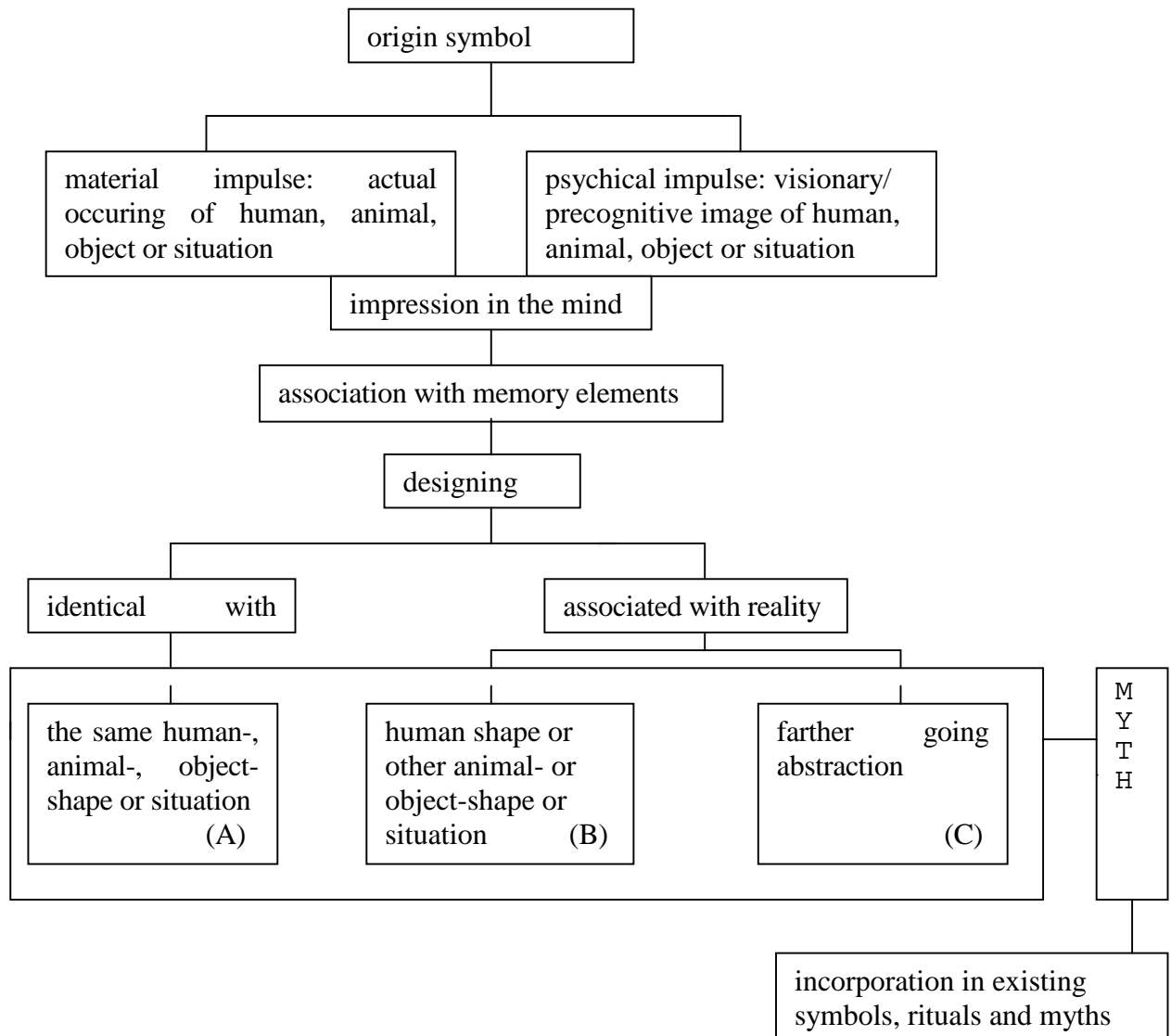
- a) The appearing of the material or immaterial, definable or indefinable, first cause.
- b) Registration of it by the mind.
- c) The attempt of the mind to interpret, by means of association.
- d) The recognizing or 'appropriation' of what has been perceived.
- e) The conscious or unconscious wish to record the perceived and to make it transferable.
- f) The shaping of a symbol.
- g) The maintaining of the symbol by means of rites, arrangements, myths, or combinations of them.
- h) The incorporation of these elements in existing social structures, therefore also in existing



mythological, ritual and symbolical structures.

It concerns the oldest form of magic that man knows. He observes, registers, names, interprets, recognizes and acts, therefore controls. The result of the associations and the like is the symbol; in a broader sense also the myth in which the symbol is embedded. Reality is transformed into symbol or myth. The following diagram illustrates this.

*creation of symbol and myth*



## sub A

Category A of the diagram pictures the situation in which the symbol-bearer, the symbol-vehicle, is embedded in a myth and as to design remains identical with its material or psychical example. The latter consists of a celestial figure, a hero, an object, a plant, an animal. An example of a number of possibilities is given underneath.

### *human being:*

A purveyor of culture: A flying visitor or a mighty tribal chief. Symbolized by an as accurate as possible (= identical) reproduction of the person with the attributes that belong to his rank (weapons, war insignia, attire).

### *animal:*

A well-known animal from the region (for instance a fox) is symbolized by the same animal shape: an exact reproduction of the fox.

### *object or situation:*

The object may be a real contrivance, or one perceived by vision, for instance an aeroplane; the situation a meteorological phenomenon, like a flood. Symbolized by an identical reproduction of the quality and appearance of object and phenomenon. Respectively by a structure recognizable as an aeroplane and by big waves.

Even objects or signs that from the outset kept an abstract appearance and therefore from their initial phase were not abstracted, belong to category A. So the whole point is, that everything that is recorded there, has been put there because it gives an as accurate as possible reproduction of a certain phenomenon, whether it did or did not have an abstract form.

## sub B

In category B of the diagram as well, the symbol-bearer, i.e. the symbol-vehicle, is rendered as contained in a myth. The symbols in this category are no true-to-life reproductions of the tangible reality or the reality known by vision. The similarity between symbol and origin is more indefinite, and starts to become obfuscated. Examples are:

### *human being:*

Now the human creature is symbolized with modified exterior characteristics, which do not fit in the originally observed picture. For instance it has more arms, more heads or an animal head and extraproportional dimensions.

### *animal:*

The animal that lies at the basis of the myth (fox), is now represented by another animal, like the squirrel. The basic item, the animal, has remained the same. The actual animal species is obviously of secondary importance in the myth concerned, therefore exchangeable.

*object or situation:*

The symbolical reproduction of the plane consists of an analogous other object: a big bird of prey. The meteorological phenomenon, the flood, returns in the shape of a hailstorm.

sub C

Category C in the diagram gives an even more abstract form, in the sense that it has no longer a visible similarity whatsoever with its origin. The origin has been reduced to elementary signs. Symbolism thus reaches its final stage of being obfuscated, and without a key can no longer be unriddled. Examples of this are:

*human being:*

Symbolized by a bolt of lightning when a devastating individual is involved; by the sun when a wise man is involved.

*animal:*

The authentic fox is replaced by a stylized tail.

*object or situation:*

The object (aeroplane) and the phenomenon (flood), are symbolized respectively by the shape of a cross placed in the middle of a solar symbol, and by a number of arched lines with which inundated ears of corn are represented.

It is conceivable that there are cases where the observer cannot determine whether the symbol renders reality, or is a free interpretation of it. In our terms: whether it is a symbol of category A, B or C. Sometimes the distinction cannot be made. The characteristics incorporated in the symbol can reflect reality faithfully, but at the same time be so unaccustomed that whoever sees the final result - the symbol -, thinks to see in it a distortion of a subject or an object known to him, or of a familiar situation. The observer thinks to be confronted with a symbol of category B, whereas it belongs in category A. This happens when in the symbol the maker of the symbol has classified peculiarities that have been observed by himself, but which by a future observer of the symbol are not reduced to the elements that were in the mind of the symbolmaker. When somebody presents himself in a pilot suit with oxygen tubes, then an accurately drawn human shape with a number of tubes attached to it forms a reasonable and acceptable laying down of

his essence. The future observer of the symbol will recognize human features in it, but will not be able to place the tubes. Instead of the symbol ending up under A, as the reflection of something almost actually seen in that shape, it is ordered under B, as if it is a mutilated or pointless rendering of a normal human shape, a free interpretation. Depending on the situation a symbol shaped as an animal can be rubricated both under A and C of the diagram. When the original central idea is a speckled beetle, it can because of its elementary shape be represented by two semicircles as wing cases, a few narrow lines for legs and a few dots for dots, and be ranged under A. The shape of the beetle is so elementary however that it can hardly be reproduced more abstract, and such a shape through that can almost as well fall under C. So a borderline case can occur that belongs half under category A and half under category C.

Classifying a discovered symbol or symbolical element in a myth in the right manner, depends on the proof that we have about the motives of the symbolmaker. These we are almost never familiar with. The discoveries and new insights with regard to the motivation determine whether a symbol has yet to move from the one to the other category. Since the maker of the symbol has been in immediate contact with his source, unlike the later observer (who will have to manage with the symbol only), both, when asked to put the symbol in category A, B or C, would establish different criterions for their choice. A symbol placed in category A by its designer is put in category B by somebody else. Thus the abstract sign put in category C by an observer, may basically belong to category A, had it been left to the symbolmaker to make a choice concerning that. Through the elapsing of time, which creates an ever greater distance between the cultural perception of the observer and the symbolmaker, a symbol may in the comprehension of the observer shift from category A to B or C. The reverse order, the shifting from C to B or A, is also conceivable. Such a shift is conditional upon motives that yet come to light and on the basis thereof can be attributed to the symboldesigner. It may also be conditional upon new technical developments that seem to be in line with the shape of the symbol. Everything revolves around interpretation, but the subsuming of a symbol under the one or other category does not say a thing about the correctness of the classification. The latter must be supported by well-founded theories or argumentation.

### *active and passive acting*

We now have investigated part of the path that from an initial observation leads to a symbol. The patterns that become visible in this path, cannot be isolated from someone's motives to convert (i.e. transform) reality, as he sees it, into symbol, ritual or myth. Nor can these patterns be isolated from the kind of activities that one must develop in the process. These activities can be split up into acting and non-acting. The acting encompasses an active, outwardly visible component; the non-acting is its passive side. It is not easy to indicate an exact borderline between this, as the being passive in a studied way, can be called an active act. For our purpose the distinction between an active act and the avoiding of it, for instance through observing a taboo, remains clear. Transforming reality into a symbol (myth) takes place by acting or not acting. The moment that one wants to act or wants to refrain from it, one is in a position that is positive, negative or neutral. What has been said with regard to the difference between acting and non-acting goes also for the concepts positive and negative. They cannot really be separated. The combinations of actions can be classified as follows: from an originally positive, negative or neutral situation, acting or non-acting leads to a future positive, negative or neutral situation, or to the consolidation of the old point of departure (status quo). The number of combinations of kinds of actions with their results is multiple. He who is interested in this, will

not find it difficult to use the given diagram as a key on a number of real-life cases. We are restricting ourselves to the examples hereunder. For a starting point we take a nation that has gathered in the yearly harvest. The reaction to the successful result might be the following one:

- a) One spontaneously decides to institute a thank-offering to assure good harvests in the future  
(a positive situation, resulting in acting that leads to something positive).  
Or:
- b) One begrudges the tribes in the neighbourhood that they too have a successful harvest, and asks the gods to make the neighbours have a crop failure. By way of thanks vows of loyalty are made to the gods (a positive situation, resulting in acting, aimed at something that is negative).  
Or:
- c) One establishes a thank-offering, without intending with it that in the future rich harvests arise again (a positive situation, resulting in acting, with a neutral result).

We may assume that the symbolical act or the ritual event is not aimed at a decline. Even to him who implements actions that are aimed at destruction, the success of the things that he has set himself a target of would prove very helpful. In that sense there is no striving after a worsening or setback of the situation in which one finds oneself.

## 4 STABILITY

### *the memory*

The symbol has come into existence by way of associating, and with its designing the intention and the motives of the symbol designer have played a part. Now that the symbol is there, it can last, be modified, or fall apart again. Our first impression is, that a symbol cannot survive long without changes. So many people look at it (who all in their own manner provide it with a meaning or think that they have fathomed well the intention of the maker), that the symbol seems doomed to be unravelled from the very beginning. Therefore it seems odd that many symbols last for centuries. Who sees to it that they remain usable? To find this out the right things must be interrelated. That a symbol remains recognizable for many years, is not so much in conflict with the thought that from the beginning it has been subjected to a variety of interpretations or changes. When the right persons manage to channel the ever diverging meanings, just like in laserlight the beams of light are forced to remain running parallel, those meanings do fluctuate somewhat, but the deeper core remains intact, just like when certain groups of initiates or priests set themselves the task of sustaining the knowledge concerning the symbol and to pass it on to others, initiates. There is a commonly known tendency among the peoples to prolongedly pass on old stories exactly and without noticeable mutilation. Think of the tribes where the stories were passed on from shaman to shaman. Some variation was allowed. This was only to be done to clarify the story (a technical undertaking), or to give an atmospheric description (a more metaphysical undertaking) that was in better keeping with the circumstances of the people or the period. When the main requirements were met, namely preserving the core of the story, one did in fact something like the contemporary historiographers do when they pass on knowledge about the past. Among many tribes it is seen that the public protests when the outlines of the story are abandoned, like with the American Navajo Indians. A classical example of the stability of the people's memory was given by the Indians who observed the arrival of Columbus. More than a hundred years later their tribe gave an exact description of the pioneers that arrived at the time. So, nations that - centuries ago - for the first time saw strangers, seem to be able to tell exactly how those looked at their arrival. The Cackchiquel Indians still gave very accurate descriptions too, of the Spanish colonists from 1500; and Indians from northwest America still manage to give detailed statements about the French fleet that called in at their territory in 1786. The essence of such narratives is not strongly changed in the course of the years or superseded by something else. It comes to us in the shape of a literally or symbolical description of human being, animal, object or situation.

Amidst the Eskimos myths live on in which the working of the *primaeval* memory of man comes to the fore. They deserve to be taken seriously. Sometimes we must change our own history for this. The Eskimos are no beings who lag behind and live in iglos in the way that we know from juvenile literature. They are developed human beings, with a culture of their own and a history that must be taken seriously. It sometimes contains elements that are difficult to explain:

"The first people were much stronger than the people of today. Thanks to their sorcery they were able to let their houses fly, and a snow shovel could move of its own accord and clear snow. And when the people needed new food, they just remained sitting in their houses and had them fly to different places. But one day somebody complained about the noise that the houses made when they flew through the air. And there was so much power in his words, that the houses at

that same moment lost their airworthiness. And since then there never has been anything more stable than a house.<sup>11</sup>"

It would be curious when this narratives had originated from the imagination of the Eskimos. Because in other myths this nation goes through events that are at least as strange, one may wonder how far history is conveyed in a veiled way. Eskimo folklore tells about tribes that in the beginning of time have been brought to the frozen North by colossal metal birds. About snow that lies on the ground and burns, and fire that rains down from heaven, with which vulcanism is indicated. It talks about animals that are extinct since ten thousand years.<sup>12</sup> One might think that our contemporaries acquainted the Eskimos with the pre-glacial period, but the Eskimos lived so isolated from our civilization and our geological science that they cannot have obtained their information from people from our time. The American Pawnee Indians narrate that there was a time when Tirawa Atius (the Power Above) had put gigantic people on the earth. But the giants became overconfident and proud and had to be destroyed. Storms came from the northwest, the waters rose and rain fell down. The race of the giants was destructed. Their bones were laid up near a hill. Later they appeared to have originated from dinosaurs.<sup>13</sup> The reach of the memory that the Indian myth shows, commands respect. From the account appears the recollection of a deluge, that has also stayed alive with countless other nations. The remarkable thing is the certainty with which the Pawnees managed to indicate the remains of the animals. A reference like theirs can be interpreted in several ways:

- a) From antiquity data regarding the deluge and the place where the bones were situated have been passed on to the tribe. This way the Pawnees were kept informed about the final resting-place of the animals. The tribal members assumed that it concerned the remains of gigantic human beings.  
Or:
- b) Only in later times have the bones been discovered by the Indians, who left them undisturbed but built a myth around them, impressed as they were by the enormous dimensions of the remains. The Indians attributed them to giants, and linked this view to an already existing myth about a deluge in which there was no talk of giants.  
Or:
- c) The recollection of a deluge in the time of which giants would have existed, remained, whereas the dinosaur bones were only discovered in later times. Because the Pawnees knew the myth about the deluge they projected this knowledge on the bones that were found. With this the bones had become the remains of the giants.

### *corruption*

It may be so that stability in the transfer of interesting events is strived after, but in the course of time changes are inevitable. Anyhow the result of a change is falsification. This is already the case when the myth has an obviously material basis. But even when the myth only contains concoctions, the changing of it is rewriting of history. This is because myths, just like the



official historiography, constitute a part of the intellectual life and they can be corrupted indeed. Obfuscating, even as a kind of rewriting of history, is the result. The modification need not be deliberate and if it is, the intention need not have a negative character. A number of developments may have merged, through which a tissue has been formed of primal memories and recent memories. Owing to this, history eventually continues corrupted. The obfuscating or being adulterated of a myth may arise through interlacing with other existing narratives. Sometimes personages change as regards description or name - for instance under the influence of the work of missionaries -, while attempts are made to keep the core of the myth undamaged. The adjusting of the exterior and the attributes of the Christian saints in the churches in Central America is an example of this. Except that changes may occur through interweaving with other stories, an interweaving of truth and fiction must also be taken into account. The corrupted myth may have become a symbolizing of the truth, as an answer to the wish to reduce the latter to elementary images. The purpose may have been that one might be better able to study the essence or to make the contents more conveniently arranged or better transferable. The myth may become the vehicle of a secret message. Something similar took place in Europe in the Middle Ages, when events that had really happened were subsumed under allegories by the minstrels, who thus circulated them. Some minstrels performed their songs in such a way amidst the right companies, that only a part of the audience understood what was communicated and that a political or mystical announcement was made.

One is inclined to assume that obfuscatings are the result of a conscious act, of intention. This seems not to be confirmed in cultures where they are a feature of reality; of common day-to-day life that is approached allegorically. In that situation an ordinary message from the one person to the other is translated in oblique, evasive, symbolical language. Reality is translated into symbols, be it for the sake of the artistic result, or because a metaphorical rendering of reality has become current by degrees. Such a metaphorization is hardly recognized as such by the persons involved. It is just the way how one expresses oneself. The predilection (among other things within the Aztec culture) for mystification of circumstances which to our mind did not need this because there were no secrets involved, is a useful datum with the clarifying of the contents of uncomprehended symbols. When there are enough firsthand writings or exact notes about a nation that thinks mythical to a great extent, it is possible to discover the line along which the transformation has taken place - by comparing the final outcome of symbolizing and mythologizing with the original event, with the basic data that is. In other words: given the daily events that can still be reasonably verified, we can try to work out how they have been transformed into which allegories. When this is successful, we are a step further to also interpret other symbols with such an allegory key. Among the complications that we have to deal with, belongs the transforming of already obscured images into new obfuscatings. When these are recent, they have the advantage that they can be reasonably understandable for contemporaries.

### *change through political abuse*

There are factors in society that have such an impact, that they are capable of practically annulling the original meaning of the symbol and of taking possession of it. Politics is one of them. For instance, through the use that in the second World War has been made of the swastika, it has got a meaning that no longer bears a relation to its ancient meaning. At present it is a contaminated symbol, put under taboo. Later generations when seeing the swastika will primarily remember its horrors and negative meaning, and no longer have its original meaning in mind. Most people have become acquainted with it only when it was used for a different

purpose than the original one, and to this very day still do not know where it comes from. Thus under the influence of upheavals the original meaning of myth or symbol can retreat into the background. The idea that we have of symbols is shifted by revolutions and invasions. The Spanish chronicler Cieza de León said in the time of the Central-American conquests:

"By this plan<sup>1</sup> from the mouths of one generation the succeeding one was taught, and they can relate what took place five hundred years ago as if only ten years had passed.<sup>14</sup>"

But the Aztecs adopted for political reasons many myths from subject nations; of course those myths which could contribute to the honour and glory of their own realm. The American professor Jack D. Forbes says:

"It is true that many Mexican thinkers and holy men of the 15th and 16th centuries (...) tried to keep alive or get back to the ancient truths, but the Aztec political leadership dominated and warped the religious tradition.<sup>15</sup>"

Thereupon the Aztecs pretended that they themselves were the owners of the myths. Such symbolical elements, adopted for the own nation, can within that nation continue to mean an explicate anachronism. Many accounts are left for us that have been made before western culture primed big changes with primitive societies. Cultural or other invasions inescapably lead to many old symbols and customs being unrecognizable within a short period of time, because these become fused with cultural elements of the party that establishes the invasion. In some cases we must go back until before the Spanish invasion in America, and the initial phase of colonialism there or in Africa, to be sure whether ancient cultures were influenced by western civilization.

### *a fictitious memory*

The fact that the contents of certain writings are very old, does not yet prove that everything passed down in it has really come about. In the past one may have indulged in fantasies just as easily as we do nowadays. The person who in the far future finds a science fiction novel from our time, will have to take this into account. The curious thing about it is, that we tend to accept as the truth what can show age. If only it is old, it is sacrosanct and therefore in demand, but we are not always consistent in that. When the ancient things are so time-honoured, it is strange that narratives in which is alluded to extraordinary situations the one time are disposed of by us as fiction or as religious concepts, and the other time are accepted as the accounts of real occurrences. In other words: there is capriciousness to the extent that we take old data seriously and see them as the reflections of truly happened events. When we consider everything to be a concoction we wrong our ancestors with it. The dilemma is, that on the one hand we may not just accept the traditions as accounts that are historically valid, and on the other hand may not immediately discard them as fabrications. That ancient narratives need not be eyewitness accounts can be established on the basis of an analogy. Let us imagine for a moment what happens when our earth is almost totally destroyed by war or another catastrophe. Only centuries after the elapsing of the disaster human civilization will have reached its old level. Only a few people will remember the correct circumstances of the event. If after thousands of

---

<sup>1</sup> the schooling of competent storytellers among the Incas

years our libraries are dug up, nobody knows to distinguish fact from fable anymore. He who finds the fragments of a science fiction story that has been constructed as an account, will hardly have any choice but seeing in it an account of actual events. He who finds the bills of a Royal Warrant Holder may think that they belong to the royal household of an unknown king. And what interpretation is one inclined to give to an archeological find consisting of a letterheading with the wording 'Royal Factories'? Jo Spier drew utensils from our time the way they will be displayed in the National Museum in three thousand years (if it will still exist then). For example he showed a round traffic sign on which time has obliterated a couple of letters. The remaining text reads: "maximum speed 30 m." Comments under the image: "Totem pole as erected by our primitive ancestors at the entrance of their settlements. Approx. 1930. Regrettably the reconstruction of the Latin subscription is impossible.<sup>16</sup>" Judging our present society on the basis of fragmentary writings or technical debris is a tricky affair. The quantity of written documents from our time is vast and makes it difficult to distinguish fact from fable.

For the same reason one must be careful with judging cultures that have preceded us. The stability of symbols and myths is not an unimpressible function of their ageing. There often is a considerable effort to keep them stable. This is not always left to chance. The wish to give myths and symbols a certain stability, is understandable. By describing the special or inexplicable events one tries to keep a grip on them. Thus their transference is guaranteed. This is why the exceptional elements in the symbol must be 'captured' and must particularly remain in that state. Encaged, as it were, they must be handed down to future generations. Having arrived there, the symbolical elements may do their cultural, pedagogical work. Sometimes symbols are repeatedly wrapped in new shapes, kept in code by priests or initiates in the broadest sense of the word, or by their confidants. This policy is intended to adapt the contents to the insights of a new age, and to preserve them in a stable fashion, and to remember them better. Thus the symbol is re-symbolized, changed while being symbolized anew, made to a symbol squared. In history this is demonstrated by numerous examples.

### *sanction on abnormal thinking*

There seem to be regulating mechanisms that see to it that our myths, symbols and rituals keep their stability, and one of them is the sanction on the violating of customs, or on the deviating from prevailing insights. The stability of symbols is not only influenced by the nature of the memory, or by political force or invasions. Sanction is at least as important a factor with keeping intact the ancient regulations, symbols and customs with which our society is permeated. Whoever more deeply penetrates his own motives to accept something as true, untrue or impossible, will come to the discovery that our education to a large extent determines how teachable we are for the things with which we have to deal in life. This process starts in the family, and what has been learned there is completed at school. Our opinions are institutionalized. Everything that is contrary to what we have learned, is untrue for us. The abandoning of the certainties that we drag along with us during our entire life, undermines our selfconfidence when nothing good or better substitutes them. Those good or better things moreover should have to be brought by someone who has more authority than our parents and teachers. Peter Freuchen, who has lived for many years amongst the Eskimos, narrates how a member of the Eskimo village went to the civilized world and how he came back with the most unusual fairytales which nonetheless were told in good faith and were founded on the truth. The man was aggressively approached by his fellow villagers and almost cast out. That was the sanction on his deviating opinion. Many primitive peoples assume that the contents of their

symbolical narratives are founded on reality. They no longer manage to verify those contents, but the tradition is so old and strong already that it is accepted as a fact. From the example with the Eskimo we learn, that society is not so uncritical anymore when a matter of analogous importance is brought forward as reality by a contemporary. Driven by tradition the villagers do unthinkingly accept that their myths contain truth, and that everything described in it has indeed happened, but on a level of reality that they distinguish in a strange way from their other level of reality. They only accept what safely and far enough is hidden in ancient times. What exactly did the Eskimo witness? He had been among the whites and on his return had told his fellow villagers what had happened to him. Because he had seen impossible things, he was almost expelled from the community.

"For instance he asserted without batting an eyelid that he had seen houses that drove on, full with people who laughed and not in the least seemed to worry about the fate that awaited them. He had seen people who lived above and under each other, like birds in the cliffs. (...) And when finally he went so far as to claim that he had been in a house and on the spot had talked with Peary through a wire, although Peary himself had been very far away in a completely different settlement - then they could no longer acknowledge him as a respectable fellow hunter (...)17"

Sanction can assume the shape of ostracizing. He who in his community claims things that take a destabilizing effect, runs the risk of being expelled. This sanction seems to be a safety valve of society, because when somebody comes with new ideas the community comes under pressure. Just like when the electron offers resistance when one wants to push it out of its orbit, society tries to react with a certain counterpressure to insights and principles that withstand its fixed opinions. If the pressure is increased then the moment comes that society will gradually adapt itself to the newly presented insights. Those do not always harmonize with the expectations that gradually have been built within society. But at the same time one does not always consider them impossible by their nature. When special discoveries are made or when a primitive civilization is confronted with a further advanced civilization, friction may arise between the achievements of both parties. The party with the least developed imagination and the one with the revolutionary ideas see themselves confronted with a difference. At many moments in history nations have come into touch with wondrous apparitions that left a big impression on their unprepared mind. Think about the Aztecs, who were disconcerted when they saw two-headed beings (this was their name for a man on a horseback), and who were utterly shocked when they were confronted with the effects of cannons. Everything influences the imagination. Strange garments, a different skin colour: it may cause an upheaval or desperation. Eyewitnesses sometimes have the greatest difficulty to tell others what they have seen and especially that they have seen something special. The reticence with their audience possibly follows from a dislike of changes, or from disbelief about what the others have perceived. One does not always like to associate oneself with a bizarre reality, also because that may have consequences for someone's position in society. Not everybody is keen on being reputed to be the adherent of a unique way of thinking. Things are not easy for the eyewitnesses either. They come with new truths and know that these not always get the reception that they have imagined. The simplest thing would be to leave the strange event for what it is. Anyhow it would not constitute an infringement on the conventional opinions. Conforming oneself to them makes it a lot easier to hold one's own in society. Some however find it just as important to stand up for their own opinion or experience, and let themselves not be put off by possible negative reactions from society and by social control. Those reactions can, as we have seen, assume the shape of expelling the messenger. But it does not always have to come to that. This differs from country to country and from century to century. When the conceptions or observations of an individual

do not mesh with what is generally accepted in the community where he lives, the consequences for him will be more negative in a society that reacts primitively than in a society that has more eye for the opinions of dissenters. In communities with an autocratic nature it remains possible for some people who leave the conventional paths to acquire themselves a stable, appreciated position. At the royal courts it was the jester, who with his caustic criticism offered the king a legitimized chance to change his opinion. A privilege that sometimes was not allowed the councillors. The shaman was encouraged by the people in his role and was further cultivated in his behaviour. There are artists who every now and then take the liberty of showing aberrant behaviour. Their extraordinary conduct does not place them out of society, but just gives them that special, purported contact with a spiritual world that many are searching for, but which world is so difficult to reach.

It remains a matter of cautiously and sophisticated balancing, for society is whimsical. The artist the one time is put on a pedestal, the other time treated as a pariah. Film stars, who are the heroes of an imaginary world in due form, can also enjoy acceptance because it goes with their position. The position of the human who does not conform and, as it were on the authority of and with the consent of society, creates a whole new world. That is rewarded with status. People like to identify with the imaginary personalities that are depicted by the film stars. The borderline between acceptance and being renounced is waver-thin however. Of artists in general it is accepted that they carry us to an imaginary world, in which we can hardly distinguish truth from fiction. But within science an imaginary vision is not nearly always tolerated. Among other things the scientist who comes with a new, imaginative theory, is cast out the one time, accepted the other time. When he comes from the quarter of the established sciences and has already gained a position in it, he can with one wrongly presented theory place himself outside the establishment and lose everything that he has built. When however he brings his new discovery to the fore at the right moment, at the right place, with the right people, then maybe he is considered as normative, modern. Suddenly he is the trendsetter of a new scientific school. It is obvious that attempts to place history in a perspective that up to now very strongly deviates from the prevalent directions and tries to take the contents of mythological stories into account, has a chance of success when society can work up a tolerant attitude towards new ideas. They need not be accepted just like that, and it does not matter which area of the human nature they cover. It is just as important that they can be brought to the fore without much problems. In that respect the present time, in which we are immersed in an unremitting stream of wondrous inventions and discoveries, seems to open up perspectives.

PART II:  
THE GODS

## 5 PSYCHE

### *the deity as a projection*

He who studies the nature of symbols, will realize that the pantheon follows naturally from his field of study. Symbols not seldom assume the shape of myths. In the myth leading figures make their appearance who often possess supernatural abilities. On the one hand they are associated with powerful entities, on the other hand identified with them. In addition the widest divergent aspects are attributed to them, which not seldom are of a symbolical nature. Thus, of the Central American deity Quetzalcóatl (the Plumed Cloudserpent) it is said that he is the god of the wind, the god of the maize, of the sun, of day and night, of reason, insight, peace, of equilibrium. Besides he is considered to be the depiction of cosmic structures. The elements water, earth, fire and air are derived from this and from that picture they coincide with the entities mentioned. The structure of the deity becomes more and more complex and comprehensive through this. From the associations come forth, as we have seen, the identifications: Quetzalcóatl is equal to Ehecatl, the windgod; Tezcatlipoca, the demon; Huizilopochtli, the Aztec sun; Cinteotl, the maize. In the traditions one alternately refers to real and pseudo-gods. The explanations regarding the gods comprehend personal opinions, no matter if they are made on a religious, mythological, art-historical, metaphysical or philosophical basis. On the one hand the thought is sometimes prevalent that the deity was a historical figure, a holy man. Against this we find the opinion that he was a symbol, a projection, a creature to whom the qualities of many people of great calibre are attributed. It is to be seen to what extent human pseudogods still give us a correct picture of the real gods, by showing a conduct in their way of living that is in conformity with a great example and by preserving passed down knowledge (secret knowledge) and sometimes applying it. It is a well-known fact that when many years after the presence of a dominant person someone else takes his place, with the years the chance becomes smaller that the right information remains available about the person who has departed. Centuries later to his name qualities are added that he has never possessed. The most heroic achievements are projected on the latest known person that avails himself of the name of the visitor, because it is a fact that a nation becomes big through its heroes. The original persons or ideas that have led to the venerating get blurred by and by; they disappear from the everyday picture. From concrete entities they become symbolical ones. The horizontal and vertical broadening that they undergo through this, is no longer in accordance with their original meaning. By degrees the already mysterious individual is mystified further, and the real, original core can no longer be pointed out. It is difficult to assess whether a real person stood at the basis of a myth, and whether he was invention or reality, a human being, or some other kind of personality. It is illustrative that a deity after hundreds of years still constitutes an example for the clergy.

### *the pedagogical aspect*

The way the gods are portrayed is diverse. Besides showing exterior differences they not always appear to be consistent or stable, not always 'divine', as regards their revelations and way of behaving. Who were indicated as gods? From a number of descriptions they are brought out as rather undivine. Cicero sighs:

"Homer fantasized (...) and passed on human qualities to the gods." And he continues:

"I had rather seen him pass the divine on to us."

Both has occurred: On the one hand the projecting of divine qualities on alien visitors or ancestral beings and the attributing of higher moral principles to them. On the other hand the projecting of human qualities on archetypical beings that one has found in the depths of one's consciousness. This can be seen within religions: the projecting of human qualities on the gods and vice versa. In many countries there is talk of gods who through their knowledge brought progress to the nation, and who are on a pedestal. On the other hand it time and again arrests the attention that many gods abuse their power or, due to their passions or to other, hidden causes, do not or cannot restrain it. Of this the best known examples have been left to the Western world by the Greek and Roman gods. It is not so that the people always lower the gods to caricatures of human beings. But many a god has attracted attention through his strange behaviour and his sometimes bizarre measures. Characteristics that are not foreign to human rulers either, and therefore make it easy for a nation to reduce the divine aspects of the gods to human proportions.

Display of power with the gods can well be explained, if one sees it in the light of their role as people who for whatever reason try to impose their will. The unrestrained show of strength of some gods need not directly be synonymous with abuse of power, for the interfering may very well have had a pedagogical background. It is quite possible that their ethical standard was not understood by the nation that they favoured with a visit or among which they abided. With this, pedagogical measures must be distinguished from interventions based on pure cruelty or selfishness. Just like parents sometimes decide to take steps which are considered unreasonable by their child, while these measures only serve the purpose of preserving it from lapses or danger in its further life, the gods for the same reason seem to intervene. Later the consequences of it are the cause for the nation to fear the preceptors, and to call their 'divine' qualities human, or to attribute rights to them to which they are entitled because of their superior position. This is the more understandable when nations are concerned who are accustomed to a firm hand, be it through constant oppression by foreign rulers, or through oppression by their own sovereigns. We can be sure that the myths also register real imperfections of the gods. There is a difference between gods who administer punishment but are filled with good intentions and whose motives are nobler than the people can take stock of, and gods who as real potentates influence and subjugate the people, and lead a questionable life. The gods brought morality, ethics, death and destruction, shocked and calmed the populations. They furthered culture and civilization, and learned the people to produce these attainments and to keep them. The most advanced, religious, poetic or otherwise committed humans thereupon imparted to their contemporaries morality in godlike-entourage, embroidering on the latent, magical need of the nation for a supernatural resource, while sometimes these advanced humans used an already existing godlike - whether or not archetypical - image of a godhead as a basis. Not always is the cultural contact between gods and humans negative. In many myths the gods say that they have descended from the stars to instruct the people in dancing and other affairs. Dancing seems almost the last thing to impart to a nation when there are so many other things that are of much more benefit. Through it however we can also learn to appreciate the psychological insight of the visitors.

They sought alliance with elementary feelings and with the things that the nation seems to enjoy, like dancing. Through this the visitors tried to raise confidence and find acceptance. On the one hand the strangers may have had themselves instructed in dancing, this is, may have had dancing demonstrated to them. On the other hand they themselves can teach the people certain



dances. So maybe the gods, this is the strange visitors, just had the intention to get through to the hearts of their hosts by means of dancing. That many strangers state about themselves that they are gods and must be treated as such, may have been a psychological artifice to prevail upon the people to help them, possibly render assistance to the performing of experiments and the analysing or changing of society. Or to obtain food and other aids when through the breaking down of their vehicles, or after a shipwreck, they are stranded with a people. Sometimes the role of a godhead is simply intruded upon the visitors. This happened to the Spaniards who in the sixteenth century set foot ashore on the American mainland. These two things, the dancing and the presenting oneself as a deity, can be useful to get something done from a primitive nation. The latter method has been applied by more colonists, when they could get no cooperation from the native population.

Peter Freuchen, the Eskimo research worker, states in a report that an angakok (priest-physician-foreteller) came to see him. This man was so filled with admiration for Freuchen, that he wanted to stay a while with Freuchen and his companions. There were enough odd jobs to be done, but the angakok made no sign of doing his share of the housekeeping, because as a holy man he was only allowed to work with his brains and his guiding spirits. After a while, when the man had found an excuse not to accept any kind of work, Freuchen had had enough. He tried to reach him on his wavelength and showed him a photo on which the angakok was portrayed. Freuchen imparted him that Freuchen and his companions themselves were also holy men, to whom the arrival of the angakok was predicted. This was sufficient to put the angakok to work.<sup>18</sup> In this case the gods (the colonists) made use of the religious views of the least developed party to have their way. Upon their departure many gods give a warning to the people. Their wise counsel can be meant literally. When the gods have laid the foundation for a hygienic life among the people, which measure comes to the fore from very many mythologies, one can take their warnings (when these cover the field of hygiene) literally, to wit that illnesses might break out when the doctrine is neglected. Maybe that with a threat the godheads just want to procure that the abandoned tribal members do not relapse into their old habits. And maybe the gods want to make believe through the promised supervision that they really narrowly watch the nation. Knowing human nature they urge obedience, in the hopes that one will still be obedient at the moment that actual control can no longer be exercised. The expedition members possibly know that they cannot return and want to safeguard the implementation of hygienic, agricultural and social methods anyhow.



## 6 ANATOMY

The gods make themselves known (loved, feared) through their deeds and are first and foremost held in great esteem for reasons of their importance for the community. Their influence and actions are the centre of interest. The manner in which they manifest themselves materially and spiritually, could retreat into the background, were it not that so many interesting facets can be discovered regarding it. In Genesis we read:

- Ch. 6: 1-5: "And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. (...) There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.<sup>19</sup>"

The sentence "And it came to pass, when men began to multiply (...) that the sons of God saw (...)", can be read in more than one way. A first explanation can be that the sons of God, already present on the earth, no sooner saw the beauty of the daughters than when men began to multiply. This would signify that the heavenly sons showed little drive for investigating, and only became attentive to the beauty of the human women when the human beings began to become so numerous that they could no longer be overlooked. This explanation is not logic, for why should it take generations before they did an obvious observation? A second explanation is, that the anatomy of the sons of God and that of men has not, or has not much, differed, and that the sons of God only appeared on the earth when the humans began to multiply. We judge the attractiveness of the sexes from human standards. When our beings are attractive to 'nonhuman', 'godlike' beings, for the 'sons of God', then one may assume that there is little difference between the anatomical build of the human race and the divine race. There is talk of the discovery of the beauty of the earthly women. This beauty seems not to be known previously, which might justify the conclusion that the sons of the gods are nonhuman beings. A third possibility is, that in the passage concerned it is reproduced that a certain nation received the sons of the gods in their midst and observed that the women appealed to these sons. This observation does not have to mean that the gods saw human beings for the first time. The tribe that welcomes the strangers characterizes them as 'deities' or 'sons of God'. When the visitors seek contact with the women of the tribe, the tribe infers from that that the gods find the daughters of the human beings attractive.

From the description in Genesis it appears, that the divine sons could beget children: the said giants. Maybe we must not take the indication literally that gigantic creatures appeared. When there were human beings from which the ancestry was unknown, one may have called them gods or giants. That there is talk of gigantic beings may refer to both shape and strength, insight or wisdom, like we speak about 'a great man'. The fact that for their part the children of deities and human beings begat children, proofs that their genetic blueprint allowed this. If it is to be taken literally that the children of the sons of the gods were gargantuan, then their giant shape implies that the gods themselves were also superhumanly big. About the relatives of the sons of God no further explanation whatsoever is given.

*the combination god - human - animal*

The Bible is not the only place where there is talk of giants, gods and other powerful beings. In numberless myths three kinds of powerful beings or appearances with a striking character appear as leading figures or as purveyors of culture: human beings, animals and gods. The humans manifest themselves to us as beings with human and possibly animal qualities and behaviours. The animals as beings that, in addition to animal qualities, possess a considerable range of human abilities. The gods finally need not necessarily be distinguished from the just described categories.

After all they either have an animal shape themselves with in it the combined qualities of an animal or a human being, or a human shape with human and sometimes animal qualities. The distinction lies in the fact that the thus acting deity not exclusively remains a purveyor of culture, but is designated as a deity by the people where he lives on. The divine lies in the supernatural appreciation of his qualities. The fact however that the mythical principal characters have powers at their disposal that are more than common, is not the only reason why one proclaimed them deities. Otherwise an animal that possesses the exceptional capability to speak (as is often the case within myths), would already a priori be proclaimed a deity. And so in our opinion the qualification 'deity' is used disorderly. Within one and the same culture it may even happen that one section of the population ascribes a godlike status to an important personality, another group names him as an important but nondivine preceptor, whereas others ascribe to him neither the one nor the other qualification. Within Western civilization we find an example of this with regard to the central figure of Christianity, and although with Christ - as one predominantly presumes - there is no mythical personality involved, the comparison may be drawn altogether, for the situation illustrates that the term 'deity' can be both irregular and admitting more than one interpretation. A special place is occupied by the deity who possesses characteristic qualities of neither animal nor man, without having to be amorphous. In many cases the mythical central figure has points of contact with either a human or an animal shape and is visualized accordingly. When the animal characteristics have the upper hand, the leading character of the myth lives on like an animal, this is, as a being that because of the greater part of its distinctive qualities is compared with an animal and therefore is represented by an animal. The attributed animal qualities must not be conceived in the sense that negative, 'beastly' traits are involved. Speed, cleverness, slyness, dangerousness, vigorousness, tenderness, simplicity, are just as many characteristic features of certain types of animals. In addition to the fact that the central figures because of their qualities are often compared with animals, the animal may have been staged as a deity for any reasons. Choosing the animal species sometimes is, sometimes is not, tied up with the character of the personality to be depicted. Thus aggressive or nonaggressive behaviour can be linked (depending on how it turns out) to a nonaggressive animal. In respect to man the animal that comes into relief is inferior in only a few respects. That the principal characters of myths are portrayed in one or other form, is greatly connected with the wish of man to adequately render his reality, which, as we have seen, is of a physical or psychical, mental nature. When a human being performs great deeds, he can be portrayed in the myth as a simple creature performing great deeds. But when the nature of a strange creature, his 'personality', his clothes, means of conveyance and weapons, the accessories and the materials that he avails himself of, cannot be properly circumscribed, and when only a limited amount of reference material is available, then the vocabulary of a people is put on the test. It takes imagination to classify a being that hardly resembles a human being, and it is hard to describe pieces of equipment that are unknown, or to tell someone else what the materials are that this equipment seems to be composed of. In our days we would use terms like 'aluminiumlike clothing', or 'it looked the most like plastic'. Both comparisons are only useful in a society that knows aluminium and plastic. We explain the strange material with the aid of familiar material

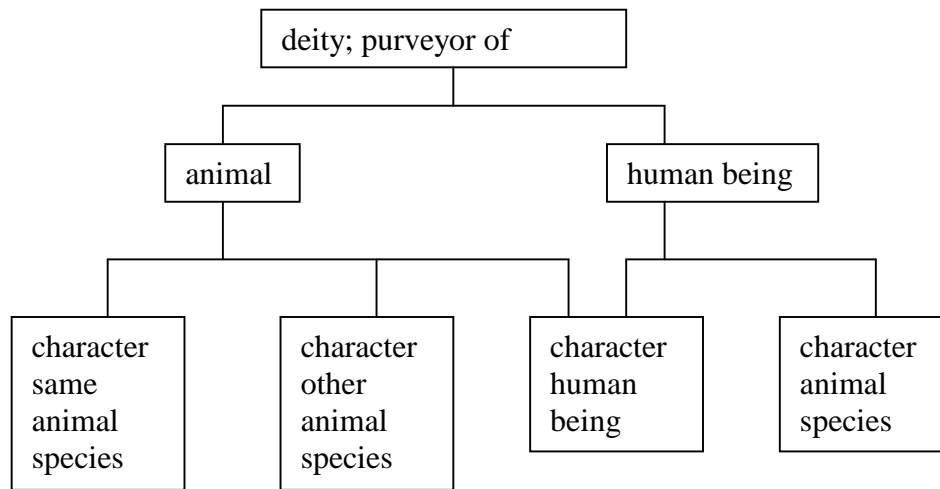
that looks very much like it and comes from our environment. Whoever gets into touch with a being that is rigged out grotesquely, cannot in certain circumstances get away from the impression that he faces an animal; an indescribable creature for which he finds no name, that he cannot classify. The creature seems to be not human, so maybe it resembles an animal the most. But this too does not always constitute the right replacement for the things that have been noticed. The creature for instance possesses features that for want of a correct labelling are described as 'animal legs' (protected limbs, the landing gear of a flying appliance), or 'horns' (antennae). Mythology gives many examples on this point. Especially the semi-divine creatures intrigue through their humanity, or their being half-human, half-animal. According to the mythological reports the balance of power between man and the human-animal creature has not always been equal. Sometimes the human-animals dominated man, sometimes man dominated the human-animals. It is just the same with the god-humans compared to man. It looks as if they descend from ancestors of consequence and, with the elapsing of the years, lose their influence, because the recollection of the ancestors becomes blurred. The noble blood gets interbred.

In certain mythological junctures the animals seem to be in charge. In most cases they are human-animals, as, aside from their being animal, they possess very many human qualities (among which waging war, speaking, assembling and administering justice), or human features, like pieces of equipment that are typically human. Of this, mythology knows many examples too. Giving a definition of what must be understood by 'human being', 'animal', or 'deity' within mythical symbolism, is not easy. For this requires knowledge of how the appearance of a strange creature acts on the mind of a human being. Does this strange creature have a magnetic, unmistakable personality? Does it strongly remind one of an animal? Does it resemble the people of the nation that it mingles with? Or does it possess protuberances which give it the appearance of a deer? Has it a rather human appearance or is it so dazzling or extravagant that it makes an unearthly, 'divine' impression? The descriptions in mythology are sometimes circumspect. In Ezekiel, Ch. 1: 26, the Bible talks about: "the likeness as the appearance of a man." The Iroquois, who will be given a specific chance in chapter 7, tell, speaking about their god Hi'nun, that he found himself surrounded by creatures resembling human beings. In both situations it is not explicitly said that the strange visitors were human beings, only that they had a human appearance. Through the hybrid of qualities a shape can arise that has something of both, of man and animal. The theme of the creature with the double shape, found in numberless countries, can be thus explained: A stranger wears an eccentric costume. The design of his attire seems to have given him a second body, which causes that one forces him into line with a strange being. When the creature takes off his covering, his second 'I' appears. This can explain the phenomenon of the dual personality. The double aspect in the character of the gods is a motif found in numberless places, among other things with the Bolivian deity Viracocha who is depicted with a jaguar head, with the Lord of the Universe Purusha whom we encounter with the Hindus, with Hunahpú who is portrayed in the Popol Vuh of the Mayas and with Pariacaca, the falcon of mount Condorcoto from the Peruvian mythology. In a following chapter we shall consider Purusha and Pariacaca more specific. All these gods are described or portrayed with a so-called Janus face. An esoteric or exoteric explanation can be devised for this. In the esoterical explanation the one half of the face or the front or rear side of the deity shows the true, inner, good and spiritual side of the deity or of man. The other side shows the lower traits, the passions and instincts, the bad, the demonic and the de-humanizing features. That there is always an esoterical meaning behind the profile of a double shape remains (in our opinion) to be decided. After all, the depiction of a double-edged deity (when we see it as a symbolical reflection of the palpable, real, actual shape of the person who has served as a model) can be a perfect reproduction of reality. The exterior features which are characteristic for a deity are captured in

figurines, drawings, masks or mythological narratives. An example of this we find in the person of Quetzalcoátl, whom we can classify as an animal-human. Further on this classification is explored more deeply. In the Uhde collection of the royal museum for cultural anthropology in Berlin a stone head of Quetzalcoátl is situated, depicted with a part of a serpent body twining round his right eye. He is often portrayed with a snake in the face. When the Aztec general Montezuma met Hernando Cortés, he gave him four divine equipments. One of them was a headdress in which the snake was assimilated round the eye. According to the legend Quetzalcoátl is a deity who descended from heaven. In view of the many descriptions that are circulating about him as a flying creature, we may wonder whether the serpent mask contains the memory of Quetzalcoátl's use of a special helmet provided with tubes to ensure the input of gasses or liquids. Possibly the memory of this was handed on to the descendants of Quetzalcoátl's pupils by means of the serpent symbol, a perfect representative of the tubelike pieces of equipment like liquid-tubes, microphone-, oxygen- or other tubes that show much resemblance with real snakes. The real Quetzalcoátl might have worn such an equipment. This would explain why beings with a snake in the face would be stargods of necessity.

Yet a snake does not have to signify that the gods were not of this world. The present-day earthly pilots wear 'snakes' too, to be provided with oxygen at great height. That the positioning of the snake is described differently here and there, seems to be a detail of minor importance, for it is a characteristic phenomenon in mythology that actual events are preserved in essence, whereas the elaboration of those events changes constantly. Moreover, tubes that fulfil a technical function can be attached to and round the body in all kinds of ways. The just described stone head of Quetzalcoátl has two facial halves, the one of which is human as usual and the other shows the snake and some other symbols, as if Quetzalcoátl can un-mask himself and show his true face.

*character mythbearer*



As we have noticed before, the mythological strange beings can be classified into three categories: in beings of a divine, human or animal nature. Of these groups we can make combinations, so that theoretically nine classes appear to the observer: the god-god, the god-human, the god-animal, the human-god, the human-human, the human-animal, the animal-god, the animal-human, or the animal-animal. But there is a complication that we have indicated before. No strict distinction can be made between man or animal on the one hand and deity on the other hand. The qualifications man and animal rather have a biological, anatomical basis, whereas the god-image is a specification summary on the basis of a) physical characteristics: unearthly shapes, non-animal and nonhuman; b) aspects of power: unearthly physical or psychical abilities, nonetheless practised by hominids or animallike creatures or non-animal and nonhuman creatures; c) features that are not tied to the nature of the creature itself: special pieces of equipment, peculiar vehicles, powerful weapons; or d) great cultural influence: of hominids or animallike creatures, or non-animal and nonhuman creatures. Therefore it is not realistic to make a description of the theoretical combinations that includes a strict separation between animals, human beings and deities on the basis of a mere physical characteristic. More than that, the nonphysical characteristics of the deity (shining metals, nonhuman shape, special equipment) can themselves be named with the concepts 'human' and 'animal'. When a human being moves forward in a flying vehicle, the vehicle that serves him as such, can bear animal characteristics. It may have the shape of a snake, of a turtle, of a spider. Quetzalcoátl is seen depicted as a half spiderlike, half humanlike being. An animallike vehicle has legs (landing gear) or horns (antennae), et cetera. When the flying human being in addition to this gets great cultural significance we have to deal with a humanlike being that, with the preservation of his animal qualities, is elevated to a deity from his state as an animal-human. Yet we can try, despite all the said limitations, to chart in nine combinations (of which some are improbable) the appearances of the mythological principal figures. Doing this we operate the generic term 'unearthly' to describe what really is not of this earth, or what is indefinable, blinding or unreal and falling outside the normal cultural pattern and intellectual grasp of the observer. In the eyes of the observer the strange phenomena can be named nothing but unearthly, indefinable, amorphous. Taking into consideration the being and his appearance in the most comprehensive meaning of the word, we thus can arrange the following connections:

- The god-god: Everything - both the creature itself and its equipment - radiates a non-earthly reality.
- The god-human: A creature largely recognizable as a human being, with an unearthly equipment.
- The god-animal: A creature largely recognizable as an animal, with an unearthly equipment.
- The human-god: An unearthly looking creature, and an equipment with human characteristics.
- The human-human: Speaks for itself.
- The human-animal: A creature largely recognizable as an animal, and an equipment with human characteristics.



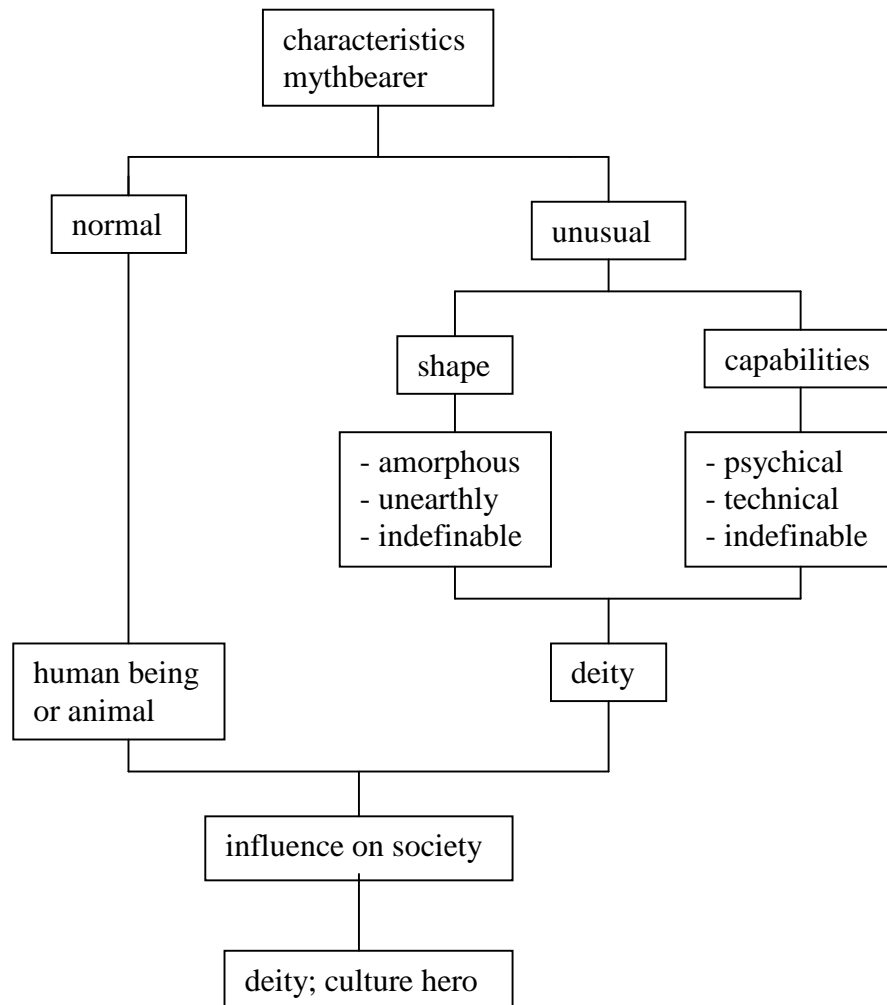
The animal-god: An unearthly looking creature and an equipment with animal characteristics.

The animal-human: A creature largely recognizable as a human being, and an equipment with animal characteristics.

The animal-animal: A creature largely recognizable as an animal, and a similar equipment.

The diagram with which we close this chapter, conveys, that when the personal nature (physical/psychical) and/or equipment of the mythbearer possesses normal human or animal characteristics, in the initial period of the myth he takes up a role in it as a normal human being or animal. If divine characteristics are attributed to the human or animal mythbearer, it will be because his appearance at certain points deviates from the habitual. Aspects of his shape or capabilities show characteristics that fall outside the normal cultural pattern of the observer. The observer is not familiar with what he sees and cannot equate the perceived with the cultural elements that he is familiar with; the things perceived can at the most be associated with those cultural elements. For instance, an aeroplane lands in the inland parts of Africa where no one has ever seen an aeroplane before. The pilot is recognizable as a human being, but is wrapped in an exceptional, shining suit with antennae (horns) and tubes (tail). He has both human and animal characteristics. The indigene cannot place the aeroplane, but he can associate it with a bird. Maybe he assumes that the pilot in a way is fused with his plane. The exceptionality of the total appearance might render the pilot the status of a deity. Should this potential mythbearer definitely be stranded in the community where he ended up, and obtain great social influence there, it might well be that he is also elevated to a culture hero. With the aforesaid cultural significance of the mythbearer is meant his influence on the culture of the community that he actively participates in. This is distinct from the cultural role that a mythbearer in later times receives because of the fact that he is a mythbearer. It remains difficult to tell apart the role of culture-bearer and deity, for these concepts are indiscriminately used in the most diverging definitions. We come close to the truth by putting that it means a small step to elevate a culture-bearer to a divine status, and a deity to the status of culture-bearer. It does not have to be so, that all the gods that we are familiar with from mythology, have received their qualification along the way given in the diagram. The reverse, namely that the initial appearing of an exceptional being can lead to the creating of deities in the sketched manner, is valid though. The exceptional creature can be of allochthonous or autochthonic origin, but in our survey we start from strangers mainly. The unusual features mentioned in the diagram are kept limited for the sake of the example. Many other ones can be added, like the ability to communicate with others at a distance. All the unusual abilities that seem like magic to an uninitiate can be listed here.





The effect that the appearing of strangers who are rigged out with technical appliances has on a nation that is in technically primitive circumstances, is great. In the decades that lay behind us the Western expeditions made a big impression on civilizations that from a technical point of view yielded to them. The effect that highly developed civilizations thousands of years ago had on lesser developed contemporaries will be comparable with that. The present historiography asserts, that the major part of all the knowledge that we now possess has only come to us in the last few hundreds of years, and that the technical knowledge that we have in our possession only since a short while, therefore cannot have been applied in antiquity. An analysis of mythology learns that science most likely is wrong about that. In old folk tales allusions to technical phenomena are made so often, that the conclusion that our ancestors solely formed primitive or untechnical cultures and never came in touch with high-grade technical phenomena, is premature. There is every appearance that special inventions have been made in the olden times. The marginal comment befits, that the described inventions are often seen as part of the attributes that visiting strangers carried with them, and as such these elements were bracketed together. Many mythological stories describe technical machinery, and much of it seems to regard vehicles in which deities move. To be able to answer the question how this as an element may have ended up in the myths, it is necessary that we put ourselves in the position of the observer the way that, in antiquity, he may have witnessed a phenomenon that he was unfamiliar with. A primitive nation visited by strangers comes into contact with phenomena that it cannot dispose of with simple explanations. The phenomena have shape, contents and a character of their own. Of them, elements can be distinguished that get a place in the memory. At a given moment the true nature of the visitors reveals itself. The unknown persons may be hostile or friendly. They appear to amass knowledge or to diffuse it. Sometimes they are armed but sometimes this cannot even be determined. The weapons can actually be used, whether or not indiscriminately, or they are not used at all. They are based on unknown or known principles. The propulsion of the vehicles of the visitors will or will not be visible and understandable. Are there unknown forces involved? The appliances as well as their crew have specific features. The appliances have a shape, and the crew is dressed. In what? Does the crew have an anomalous physical build? This occupies the mind of a party honoured with the uncommon visit. The attitude adopted towards the visitors is determined by these questions. Also the historical or mythical reporting comes under the influence of the way that the visitors present themselves socially and technically. No precise distinction can be made between the characteristics of the gods themselves and their equipment. The one time the godhead is related to his equipment, the other time identified with it. Then the same happens as with the godhead who wears an eccentric costume. The equipment is taken for his second shape, his second 'I'. The divine visitor seems to form a group with the vehicle in which he moves. Here the meaning and bearing of the divine vehicle as it is described in the myths (serpent, egg, mythical animal), can also be explained esoterically. At that, the dual aspect shows in the one half of its manifestation the positive side, the spiritual aspects of the godhead, or of the human who is taken for a god. The other side shows the negative, the nonhuman in his character. Yet the vehicle is not in all cases of an esoteric nature, in spite of the predisposed standpoint of some historians that indistinctnesses must be interpreted in an esoteric way when there is no other way to explain them. What is the strange thing about the descriptions of the divine vehicles? To find this out we shall continue with analysing the characteristics with which they have been passed down. In the simplest case a symbol consists of a geometrical figure. Such a symbol is experienced as timeless. When we come across it somewhere, it causes no surprise. In our opinion it may just as easily have come into existence in the dim distant past as in the present time. In principle we

accept that a geometric symbol dating back to antiquity may have a hidden (future) meaning, for instance as the expression of a chemical structure that as a visionary image has at one point in time been received and laid down by somebody. The strange thing is, that when we see an old symbol that is not elementary but on the contrary is complicated, and resembling a commonplace object from the twentieth century (like an aeroplane), this symbol is not accepted by us as the potential reproduction of an aeroplane. The fact of the matter is that the resemblance is too striking. We dare not attribute any significance to it. When we discover the depiction of an object that reminds us of our current aeroplanes, our reasoning is that it must depict something else, because the past cannot have known aeroplanes. Almost against our better judgement our mind seeks a method to deny that which has not been explained and yet is explainable. An objective analysis of the phenomenon should lead to one of the following conclusions:

- a) The resemblance of the symbol with contemporary aeroplanes was purely accidental. This means that the depicted symbol had a different meaning.
- b) The resemblance is not accidental. In the past there really have been flying objects, established in an image or symbol.
- c) The resemblance is not accidental. At the moment of its coming into existence the symbol reflects a flying object that at that point in time does not yet exist. In antiquity somebody has received a psychical impression of an appliance that in the far future, in our time that is, will be developed, and tried to lay it down. Subsequently to this the laid down image manages to bear the test of time and is recognized by a civilization - ours - that within its culture is capable of building similar appliances.

The examples that will follow next, intend to show that certain often appearing elements from mythology can be a rendering of flying machinery or of aspects of it. These mythological elements, of which there are uncounted other ones, in the essence of their meaning seem to describe a heavenly vehicle or a relation with it. We shall elucidate that the gods are in a close relation with the quoted atmospheric phenomena. The main primary motive of our analysis however still is, to investigate in how far actual, special occurrences - like the appearing of an aeroplane with nations that are not familiar with it - can be the occasion of the forming of symbols and, following naturally from this, of the forming of rituals or myths. We consider them with this point of departure in mind.

### *the circular serpent*

In many parts of the world the serpent is a being with mythological significance, although this significance differs almost anywhere. Countless interpretations have been produced in the course of the years. They vary from the proposition that the serpent is a rainmaker, to the point of view that it depicts a fertility symbol, a sign of eternity or a lunar animal. Parallels have been drawn between serpent and sun, serpent and lightning, serpent and fire, and serpents and trees from which people ascend. There is no reason to assume that the serpent, known with so many cultures all over the world, would have only one mythical or cultural meaning. It is found in the widest variety of shapes: in the form of bracelets, painted on walls or jars, depicted in the face of Mexican gods, sculptured in stone. It is found solitary or in combination with objects, animals

or humans, and here and there in combination with the sun or the stars. We encounter it twisted, straight, bent or depicted in a circle. We shall try to substantiate that the serpent under certain conditions symbolizes a vehicle that comes from near the sun or the heavens, has to do with the sun or departs in an upward direction. It sometimes seems to mirror a vehicle, at other times depict an occupant of it. That a serpentlike aeroplane or flying object that finds itself at a high altitude is related to the sun, another (moving) phenomenon in the sky, is obvious. Whether the serpent can be a symbol of a heavenly vehicle, must be shown from similarities between the qualities of the snake and such a vehicle. If ancient peoples have seen an object pass in the sky, as it has been conveyed to us in the legends, why then did they choose the serpent as the representative of the heavenly vehicle that they observed: because the vehicle spatially seen makes the same movements as a serpent, undulates through the air, draws a spiral course, moves slowly, cautiously and ominously, can move swift as an arrow if so desired, but can also remain immobile? The serpent mesmerizes, is venomous, dangerous, deadly and has segments and staring eyes. Qualities which under certain conditions make the serpent useful as a symbol. These qualities might bring us on a wrong track, were it not that mythology hastens to help us in its account of the phenomena in the heavens. One of the shapes of the snake is the circular serpent. It covers a number of mythical subelements, which will be looked at in their mutual relationship. There are several prevailing interpretations of the circular serpent as an allegory. Lewis Spence says, that the origin of this symbol may have come forth from the sun's circular shape which, according to Spence, like nothing else in nature resembles the serpent that puts its tail in its mouth as to devour itself.<sup>20</sup>

The author Maurice Bessy on the other hand sees the circular serpent as the symbol of the perpetual regeneration of nature.<sup>21</sup> It is said that Shesna, or Ananta, the king of the serpent race from Indian mythology who is supposed to support the heavens, as a serpent represents the symbol of eternity, especially when he holds his own tail in his mouth. Many other interpretations are circulating which all have the circular serpent as their subject. Spence calls the circular serpent the most effective equivalent of the circular sun and vice versa, without clearly comparing the qualities of the snake with those of the sun. This celestial body with its many qualities gives warmth, makes a course through the heavens, stands lonely in the sky, has a round shape. Every one of them aspects that appeal to the imagination and can be rendered by any symbol. For the eye the sun is static because it is spherical, and as to its course it is nonstatic. The mobility and the static quality are matters that attract attention. It is obvious that those aspects are united in a suited symbol. The question is whether this symbol must be the circular serpent. As it were, Spence tells nothing more than that the circular serpent is a proper depiction of the circular sun, because the circular sun is an proper depiction of the circular serpent. His explanation is unsuited and is not satisfactory. The circular serpent is not a priori a synonym of the sun, but can be linked to it, when the user or designer of the snakesymbol has good arguments for it or an (unconscious) cause. Although certainly resemblances can be thought up between the sun and the circular serpent, they are not of the casualness that Spence sketches. There are countless, simpler objects or symbols that are circular and, with that, form a more suited depiction of the sun through their being recognizable without much exertion for everybody: a sphere, an egg, a circle or a flower. The nature of the used material is of no importance, because it seldom plays a part with symbolical design. When one symbolizes the sun by a sunflower, one does this with the circular shape of both in mind, or because there are other similarities, like the discoidal heart and the petals: the corona. It would have been more obvious therefore that Spence had called a circle, an egg or a round flower the most striking expression. Every one of them is a much more natural representative than the artificial and laboured looking circular snake. In his reasoning Spence mentions the urge of the circular

serpent to devour itself, which would make this serpent the most effective representative of the orbiting sun. In other words, that the sun by rising in the east and descending in the west shows a similar urge as the circular serpent to run after itself and to devour itself. Yet the question remains why the circular course should be depicted by a snake. This does not become clear from Spence's explanations. He must have been aware of it that in mythology the circular serpent is connected with the sun and is found together with it, but the point why a serpent is at issue is by no means under debate with him. Spence has given the old stories a rhetorical dimension. Our reasoning will, without rhetoric and from a different angle than just now has been adopted, have to give lucidity about the sun-snake relation. That there are connections is certain. All the sketched qualities of the symbol lead to that view. What we cannot establish is whether the circular serpent was an emblem that already existed some considerable time and then appeared to be suited to indicate a relation with the sun, or whether the circular serpent was exclusively designed to illustrate such a relation.

#### *wave-like movement*

We can draw on historical reports regarding the wave-like movement of some strange atmospheric phenomena. Especially this fact must be taken into consideration when we attempt to explain the use of the serpent by primitive peoples. A characteristic quality of the serpent is its writhing way of moving. We sought and found a confirmation of our suspicion that this moving is suited to symbolize with it the wave-like movement of certain phenomena in the heavens. Not seldom there is reference in the myths to surprisingly moving heavenly vehicles. Both in ancient times and in our time this enigmatic phenomenon has been described. Observers state that the heavenly phenomenon now stands still, now shoots from one place in the heavens to another place with lightning speed. Sometimes it flies in a straight line, then with a wave-like motion. The one time the trajectory is straight-lined, then one sees the vehicle writing the most irregular patterns in the sky. In the Ramayana and Mahabharata, the holy books of the Hindus, such aircraft are thus described:

"They produced soft melodious sounds, emitted light and sparkled like fire, and their trajectory was not straight, but resembling a long undulation, now close to the earth, now removed from it.<sup>22</sup>"

An observer may associate the movement with a serpent that draws a wave-like trail through the sky. From our time concurrent reports can be found, like about a phenomenon that has been observed in 1966 in the United States of America. Alternately it seemed to rise and descend. In 1951 in Los Angeles 30 objects were observed that travelled in the last mentioned manner. Furthermore in reports it is said:

"Except hanging motionless, almost always descending and climbing are reported; the way this descending and climbing takes place is often compared with the whirl of a falling leaf. 'Flying' actually is a wrong term for the 'normal' way of moving of ufo's; one could better speak of hovering or of jumping, or of suddenly being somewhere else.<sup>23</sup>"

An observer may get the impression of a swirling leaf, but certainly also of a writhing snake. The Codex Florentino, a text from the time of the Spanish conquests in America, and chronicled from indigenous lips by Bernardino de Sahagún, gives an accurate description of an unknown flying object. It makes a circling movement:

"At nightfall it began to rain, but it was more like a heavy dew than a rain. Suddenly the omen appeared, blazing like a great bonfire in the sky. It wheeled in enormous spirals like a whirlwind and gave off a shower of sparks and red-hot coals, some great and some little. It also made loud noises, rumbling and hissing like a metal tube placed over a fire. It circled the wall nearest the lakeshore and then hovered for a while above Coyonacazco. From there it moved out into the middle of the lake, where it suddenly disappeared. No one cried out when this omen came into view: the people knew what it meant and they watched it in silence. Nothing whatever occurred on the following day. Our warriors and the Spanish soldiers merely waited in their positions. Cortés kept a constant watch, standing under a many-colored canopy on the roof of the Lord Aztatzin's house, which is near Amaxac. His officers stood around him, talking among themselves.<sup>24</sup>"

From nothing it appears whether the Spaniards had the same perceptions as the indigenes. Something had been perceived that emitted sound, spread a light and traced no straight course. It had appeared before and resembles a technical appliance, a flying machine. From the information gathered from several peoples stands out the pattern of flying objects that make an undulating movement and have been spotted at several locations in the world in more epochs. Whatever they may mean: they have been observed in our century, they have also been seen in the past and, just like now, must then have led to conclusions and associations. In theory the following kinds of wave-like movement are conceivable. There is the movement made between point A and point B. The distance between these points is bridged in a wave-like movement. Thus between A and B one does not follow the quickest way. With the other wave-like movement a distance A-B is bridged in a straight line, while the object that covers this distance executes a movement along its longitudinal or latitudinal axis. We do not know what sort of movement is made in the above described cases.

### *melodious sounds*

As you will remember, the quoted extract from the books of the Hindus talks about melodious sounds, in addition to a wave-like movement. In the myths many times melodious sounds are mentioned in relation to celestial vehicles. The Ramayana:

"They produced melodious sounds, emitted light and sparkled like fire."

The Ramayana is not the only source with such information. The Chippewas, a tribe of the Algonkins, tell that hunter Algon found a circular spot that looked trampled down. He laid down and waited. After having heard a wonderful music he saw a dot coming nearer from the sky and getting bigger. A wagon in the shape of a wicker basket, with twelve girls aboard, came down from heaven. They descended into the circle, that obviously had been used as a landing site before.<sup>25</sup> Algon captures one of the women that he has seen descending from heaven. She constructs a little wagon from willow osiers, that rises when she performs magical songs: the well-known melodious aspect in the stories about ships from the heavens.

Stories that correspond with this as to their purport are found in Micronesia and Polynesia. They are known as the 'Swan Maiden Tales': a type of story that describes female celestials who often can no longer return after they have descended to earth. They are or are not divine. Their wings or tail have been taken away by earthlings. Roslyn Poignant:



"This is a theme of tremendous antiquity; elements of it are to be found in a story from the Indian Rig Veda, recorded 3000 years ago.<sup>26</sup>"

The widely spread version of the theme encircles Oceania and Australia. In Melanesia it is found in parts of West and North New Guinea, the New Hebrides and in New Caledonia. We see that the stories about goddesses who descend from heaven and sometimes cannot return are spread over vast areas and even are not unknown in America, as with regard to the godly figure of Orejona. Not always is the sound of the unknown appliances melodious according to our standards. As we saw, in the Codex Florentino it is described as follows:

"Suddenly the omen appeared, blazing like a great bonfire in the sky (...). It also made loud noises, rumbling and hissing like a metal tube placed over a fire (...)27"

The noise can be the result of driving techniques, of which the audible component the one time makes a melodious impression, and the next time has a less pleasant effect. This depends on the personal taste of the listener, and on the distance to the object.

### *reflection*

There are yet other exceptional attributes that are ascribed to mythological subjects. W.J. Perry:

"The Cherokee of the Eastern States (...) believe in great beings shaped like snakes, corresponding to the dragons of other peoples. The Uktena is a great snake with horns on its head and a bright blazing crest like a diamond on its forehead.<sup>28</sup>"

The latter is a theme that returns in other myths, among other things with the Angami Nagas, the Zuñi Indians and peoples in India. In the last mentioned country appears Garuda, who wears a crest on his head and destroys serpents. The Uktena possesses "scales, shining like sparks." The quality attributed to the diamond, is that it makes somebody very powerful. By analogy we can investigate what the Cherokees have seen. It is clear that in nature there is not something like a real, living snake with the outward characteristics as the Cherokee Indians have described them. The conclusion is therefore justified that what they call 'serpent', looks like a serpent but is not equal to it. The horns on the head of the serpent could be the reproduction of antennae, an aspect that could give the - until now actually unknown - object its animal quality. The diamond does remind one of a shining metallic or synthetic dome or a source of light. Unless that which is referred to as diamond, develops a certain power itself, it is conceivable that the diamond only constitutes a part of something else that exercises such a power. The diamondlike substance is conspicuous through its reflection and for that reason is considered the principle constituent; the soul, as it were, of the object on which it has been fixed.

The big power of the whole is attributed to the diamond. Among the Cherokees the myth remained singularly vivid. A tribal member one day asserted that he was the possessor of the mythical gemstone. He had a haphazardly chosen stone in his possession that he carefully kept. He seized the existing myth to derive power from it. This is one of the ways how myths are corrupted bit by bit. They can develop into a new phase: that of a newly to be accepted cult. First of all, under the influence of a number of factors no longer known, the myth has come into being among the Cherokees that a stone under certain circumstances is the diamond of the

Uktena. In a later stage a tribal member claimed that he had got the stone in his possession; the stone that was already legendary. With that allegation he created a new, mythical phase. In the Bible with Ezekiel we find the following passage:

- Ch. 1: 25-29: "And there was a voice from the firmament that was over their heads (...). And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it. And (...) from the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about. As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain (...)"

- Ch. 1: 22: "And the likeness of the firmament upon the heads of the living creature was as the colour of the terrible crystal, stretched forth over their heads above.<sup>29</sup>"

The relegation in Ezekiel to the sapphire is arresting, because although the description differs in detail, the whole reminds us of the Uktena, the snake with the "bright blazing crest like a diamond on its forehead." There it is the diamond on the head of the serpent. In Ezekiel it is the description of a sapphire-like object on the top of a firmament. In both cases there is talk of a shining ambiance.

#### *armament*

The heavenly vehicles, wriggling and moving forward while generating melodious sounds, equipped with a dazzling diamond and provided with horns, sometimes appear on the scene with great display of power, and have forces at their disposal like we know them from modern weapons. Among the Iroquois the following story goes: the thunder god Hi'nun

"(...) now found himself surrounded by beings that looked like humans and among which there was one who seemed to be their chief.<sup>30</sup>"

A bystander, an Indian hunter, is addressed by this assembly, lifted from the ground and brought to a place that lies under the blanket of clouds. Under the supervising eye of the gods and on their authority this pupil of Hi'nun throws down arrows, which are intended to destroy a snake that lies in the water. After the arrows having come down an explosion follows, by which even the gods in the sky are stunned. The serpent is destroyed. The explosions are so violent and the effect goes to such a high altitude that the gods tremble, even though they are literally superior to the scene of battle.<sup>31</sup> It is as if their airship was still too close to the scene of the catastrophe and had to digest a pressure wave. The event seems to indicate that the gods (the strangers) wanted to take a member of the tribe with them on a punitive expedition, wanted to give a demonstration of their ability and tried to impress the tribe. This myth that tells us about bombardments, is not an isolated incident. There are even elements in it that we find in Ezekiel. Both Hi'nun and Ezekiel are assumed:

- Ch. 3: 12: "Then the spirit took me up, and I heard behind me a voice of a great rushing, saying, blessed be the glory of the Lord from his place."

- Ch. 3: 14: "So the spirit lifted me up, and took me away, and I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit; but the hand of the Lord was strong upon me."

It takes little imagination to read in this pericope how through the accelerating of a flying vehicle a passenger is exposed to strong G-forces. Ezekiel contains striking other fragments that evidence a flying vehicle, but these are already considered by other scholars. The person who was assumed by the assembly of Hi'nun, under supervision fought a battle with the serpent. In this myth may have been applied the figure of the serpent as the best reproduction of the manifestation of a competing celestial craft.

In the foregoing we have treated several phenomena, including that of the mythical serpent. Facets which, looked at in their relationship, hardly leave room for the posing that the serpent in the described myths has a purely metaphorical or random meaning. When, before switching to the treating of another important mythical element (the ovoid) we may draw a conclusion from the peculiarities of the serpent in mythology as we have described it, then this conclusion is, that such peculiarities probably are related to heavenly vehicles. Not all such peculiarities can be found in all separate myths. The one time the zigzag movement is mentioned, in another myth we find the description of the diamond without there being talk of a zigzag movement. The long tail is found in the stories regarding Quetzalcóatl, and there it could even suggest the condensation trail of an aeroplane. This phenomenon could live on in the name of Quetzalcóatl, which among other things means Plumed Cloudserpent. The hissing sound we find with De Sahagún, in the Codex Florentino, but need not always be mentioned or observed elsewhere in serpent narratives. Moreover the connection with melodious sounds is found both with the serpent figure and with other phenomena that indicate a heavenly vehicle. Anyhow, the indications that the serpent can be the representation of a heavenly vehicle, are revealing. Through analysing the qualities of the symbol we have tried to penetrate the essence of the depicted object and its qualities. When in the time of the creation of the snake-symbol somebody indeed designed it as the effective rendering of a heavenly vehicle that he has observed, this does not imply that all the qualities of the serpent will have been present in his mind consciously, or that he had analysed these rationally before he chose the serpent as the symbolical representation of the vehicle. There may have been two or three traits that made clear the parallel between the qualities of vehicle and serpent, while this parallel initially may have become clear on a subconscious level and later may have been objectively elaborated or completed. So the symbol may have been chosen through spontaneous association, while an analysis in retrospect indicates similar points between symbol and the cause of the symbol. The symbol may also have been devised intentionally, which means that it has been consciously designed by somebody who sought a good reproduction of that which had to be laid down in a symbol.

#### *the ovoid*

In mythology we find allusions to the ovoid in connection with the birth of prominent figures in several countries. Garuda for instance, the 'king of birds', has been developed in an egg. His head, wings and beak are those of an eagle, while body and limbs are those of a man. He wears a crest on his head. His body is made of gold. At his birth from the egg he was so blinding that erroneously he was taken for and worshiped as Agni, a firegod. Garuda is a nice example to show how difficult it is to fit in a creature in the diagram of the nine types of shapes that we have presented earlier. He can be rated among both the animal-humans and the animal-animals. He can be considered as an animal-animal, when we let the fact that he mainly has animal features be the deciding factor and not solely mind his physical shape, which is half-human,

half-animal. The whole entourage of Garuda is animal. He is considered to be the king of the birds, and his birth took place from an egg, which also is an animal element. When we exclusively mind his shape and attach more importance to the outer appearance of his body and limbs, than to his head, wings and beak, he is mainly human and can be considered an animal-human. Then there is the fact of his blinding appearance. This is a distinguishing feature of the gods, so that the classifying as a god-human or god-animal can also be upheld. The myth regarding Garuda pictures an independent being, but with some justification one can also see in him a vehicle, because in Hindu mythology he is seen as a subordinate entity, considered to be the riding animal of the god Vishnu. So on the one hand Garuda is a riding animal, or means of conveyance; on the other hand he is equated with a godlike appearance, coming from an egg. When one thinks of flying vehicles, then Vishnu might be a mothership, from which an egg (an egg-shaped reconnaissance unit) extricates itself, after which the operator (Garuda) gets off the vehicle (egg) and manifests itself. An indication for our posing we find in the Pantachantra of the Hindus. In it a story is recorded about six young men who built a controllable spaceship. 'Garuda' was its name and it could fly in all directions. It had a special navigation system.<sup>32</sup> The golden egg is also tied in with water, namely in the Vedic narrations. They talk about an egg that had floated on the water for a thousand years. Thereafter it gave birth to the Lord of the Universe, Purusha.<sup>33</sup> Out of loneliness he divided himself into two units: a part of his own and a consort. Purusha did not like this, for he united again with his antipode (puts on his outfit again?).

Tradition has it that Brahma was developed in an egg. After a year of contemplation in the egg he divided himself in two parts. It is certain that the cosmic perception of the egg as the universe in which everything has its origin, or as the enclosed environment within that universe or within the cosmic sea, is the principal motif in a number of remarkable Creation narratives. From the dividing in two poles a new or renewed entity shows up after reunion. It may be a metaphor for an alchemical, mystical principle, founded on the duality of man. On the other hand it may mean that an occupant (Purusha, Brahma) removes his garments (this is his suit or helmet), which is equal to the dividing oneself in two units: creature and clothing. The parallels of this can be found in many other mythological stories. The myths about Purusha and Brahma can be interpreted in a third manner; then the dichotomy as passed down in the stories is not a paraphrase of mystical principles or of the putting on and taking off of special clothing, but it sketches the getting out a flying appliance, the egg. In that case the reunification of Purusha with his counterpart means that he once more mans his aircraft. The era of a thousand years on the water may indicate a long and indefinite time, or the time that the vehicle has spent in the interstellar space (= sea).

In anthropological publications of Yale University we discovered petroglyphs (drawings scratched in or painted on rock), found at Essequibo River in Guyana. These depictions show an ovoid resembling a rocket. Next to it a small ladder has been drawn, with which a little horizontal line represents its connection with the 'rocket'. It seems to be the inept drawing of a child, but it can just as well be the drawing of somebody who suddenly finds himself confronted with an object that for him can only be thus described. If in our time we have a random group of people make a drawing of an aeroplane or another example of complicated technology, we must not expect to get a much more advanced reproduction of reality than the one that might be visible in the petroglyph.

[The drawing is only included in the commercial Dutch-language edition]

Petroglyphs in Guyana  
- Essequibo River  
photo C. Osgood after  
W.C. Farabee<sup>34</sup>

Next to the rocketlike object a drawing can be seen that at first sight does not represent familiar things. But when one turns the image ninety degrees, two figurines can be seen who sit behind each other in a kind of cabin. The whole has been equipped with an aeroplane-like tailpiece with a rudder. An appendage has been drawn that can be an open dome, belonging to a cockpit. The clawlike extremities of the ovoid and of the aeroplane-like form, may bear reference to bird's legs (landing gear) or to exhaust flames. Maybe the object has been depicted vertically to indicate that it ascends from the earth's surface.<sup>35</sup> This interpretation also goes for a similar petroglyph. The composition at Essequibo River is found in almost exactly the same fashion at Yakarima Rock. The depicted motives may refer to aircraft. Also at the Wonotobo Falls, the Christmas Falls and at a branch of Corantyne River suggestions have been found of spaceships and little creatures with spinous helmets on. On being asked Yale University could not answer the question whether the symbols were found exactly in the position in which they were depicted in the publications, or whether the images are collages of discoveries that have been made spatially separated from each other. As however the petroglyphs of Essequibo River strongly correspond with those of Yakarima Rock, we are inclined to the opinion that in both places in each case they were applied in a group. In more places mythology tells us something about the extraordinary function of the egg. In 1608 Francisco de Avila left behind an uncompleted manuscript put in Quechua. In 1873 it was translated into English. It contains mythical fragments about the time after the earth was stricken by a deluge. De Avila:

"In the time of the primitive anarchy called 'Purunpacha' which followed the deluge, when there was no centralized authority but each group chose the strongest man as their leader, five large eggs appeared on a mountain called Condorcoto. In one of these was the god Pariacaca<sup>1</sup>. From the five eggs on MtCondorcoto came forth five falcons, who turned into men. They were Pariacaca and his brothers. They went about doing many marvellous things.<sup>36</sup>"

Leaving the many myths aside that have been created much later after the coming into existence of a special Pariacaca cult, the interesting ingredient of the story registered by De Avila is, that there is talk of eggs, of birdpeople who become men and of many miracles. Besides it strikes that the story mentions falcons, while in the story about Garuda there is talk of the shape of an eagle. With the falcons that change into human beings perhaps one has had the intention to indicate that the flying Pariacaca and his brothers were dressed in special garments and after their landing removed them. Thus from birdlike beings that do not resemble human beings, they became anthropoids or human beings. The sketched miracles can be a result of the extraordinary skills that they as technically developed beings had at their disposal. In another myth the said eggs are described as follows: After the deluge the Indians chose the bravest and richest man as their leader. This era they called the Purunpacha ('the time without a king'). On a high mountain top five large eggs appeared and from one of these later Paricaca, the father of Huathiacuri, emerged.

Huathiacuri got entangled in several adventures, heals a man and inconspicuously mixes with the crowd. He casts a spell on some humans and changes them into an animal or a stone.

According to Spence, after the emerging of Paricaca the four other eggs on the top of the mountain opened and from them four falcons emerged. These then changed into four big warriors. They accomplished many miracles; one of them consisted of the arousing of a storm,

---

<sup>1</sup> sometimes spelled as Paricaca

that threw the house of the rich Indian<sup>1</sup> into the sea.<sup>37</sup>

According to the Peruvian myth the falcons soon revealed themselves as big warriors, that bent the elements to their will. Pariacaca right and left performed miracles in the country. An inhospitable village - Pariacaca was very soberly dressed and through that found a poor reception - was razed to the ground by him, with storm and flood as his means. The egg is the place from where powerful people manifest themselves. In this case some five persons are involved, resembling an expedition unit. That the occupants had the shape of a falcon will no longer come as a surprise, because many mythological leading figures through the nature of their equipment had the appearance of an animal being. Through the pulling off of their garb they changed into warriors.

---

<sup>1</sup> who was cured by Huathiacuri

## 8 MARK OF ALLIANCE

### *incorporation of phenomena*

In many ways the strange vehicles with which our ancestors possibly have got into contact have been described. They have been captured in narratives or in the form of depictions. According to the traditions, the visitors with which the vehicles were manned, often made contact with the population. They conveyed knowledge of agricultural technologies and other important sciences, settled as tribal members or departed again. There is every appearance that the guests have manifested themselves in various ways, and by the peoples that they visited have been visualized in shapes that are often difficult to understand. The more strange or incomprehensible the 'gods' acted, the sooner with the onlookers fear was evoked for the divine revenge. The onlookers thought that they could only extenuate this revenge by even better imitating the existing religious regulations, or by calling into existence completely new cults. With it one tried to appease the deity. At first sight one might expect that peoples have difficulty with integrating in their lives affairs that are far removed from their world of experience. However, they regularly succeed in energetically solving the issues stemming from that inability. This can be done through religion, mythologizing or otherwise. Thus the issues can be integrated in their lives. When George Catlin in the years 1832 till 1840 travelled round the Indian tribes, he arrived with the Minatarees on the upper reaches of the Missouri. When he was going to read the newspaper the Indians had no explanation for it. They therefore thought up that Catlin was occupied with curing his eyes. The Indians renamed the paper 'medicine cloth for sore eyes'.<sup>38</sup> Catlin read whole passages to these people, after which the paper was seen as an ever bigger mystery than before. Thereupon a member of the tribe wanted to buy the newspaper to add it to his medicine pouch, which could make him a big medicine man. A strange event (the reading of a paper) thus in a very short period of time transforms into something desirable that increases prestige and power or is incorporated in a cult or a ritual. It is institutionalized and made into a magical means that even almost immediately can lead to an exceptional priesthood. We already discussed the religious use that visionaries sometimes made of the images that confused or oppressed them. They linked religious concepts to phenomena that they could not understand. These visionaries lacked understanding, because the phenomena would become concrete only in the future, in an advanced civilization. A strange phenomenon is incorporated in an existing religion, or is cause for the creation of a new religion. The first mentioned possibility, this is: adopting a strange phenomenon for the confirmation of the existing cults, is demonstrated with the following account. We found it in a missionary magazine and it is from the pen of a contemporary missionary, whose article proves that the antique magical thinking can be found far into the twentieth century. Father Werenfried van Straaten reports the following:

"Sixty years ago Maria appeared in Fatima to incite the faithful to change their way of life, to no longer insult God, to devote themselves to Her Immaculate Heart, to recite the rosary and to do penance for their sins. The credibility of this message was proven by a sign in the heavens: the sun rotated three times like a flaming wheel, fell to the earth with a dizzy speed and again climbed, in a zigzag fashion. The phenomenon, which lasted ten minutes, was perceived by tens of thousands of people and was comprehensively covered in the Portuguese press. This sun miracle was the confirmation of a series of revelations.<sup>39</sup>"

That the sun turned round three times like a flaming wheel has not been detected by any observatory. On being asked a member of the American Astronomical Society, P. Stahl, gave us



a confirmation of this. Besides his regular work he has given tuition on the relation between pseudo-science and astronomy, and he imparts to us: "There is absolutely no observatory record of any unusual phenomena to do with the Fatima reports." He ascribes the observations to mass hallucinations or to the suggestive influence that atmospheric movements may have on the mind, and concludes: "There was no unusual behavior by the sun, since no observatories anywhere on earth reported this. Hence, whatever was 'observed' had to be a purely local phenomenon and could not involve the actual sun, else it would have to be witnessed in vastly more places than Fatima.<sup>40</sup>" Apart from the question whether the sun moved or rather the earth: when the event would have been real it would have meant the end of every observatory, plus the end of humanity. Father Werenfried however seizes the appearance of a strange phenomenon to demonstrate the credibility of the message of Maria at Fatima. Objectively seen, the affair can be summarized as follows:

- a) No attention has been paid to the physical consequences of the sign in the sky.
- b) It cannot be proven that Maria has tried to give a message.
- c) The sign in the sky has not been interpreted as a phenomenon that stands alone, but has exclusively been judged in the assumed relation to Maria, after which it has been placed in a causal connection.
- d) The sign in the sky has been incorporated in an existing world view.

In the past more often conclusions have come about in the way of Father Werenfried. This was done by priests and laymen, be it with good intentions or with the intention to mislead and to manipulate, and possibly without these persons having been aware of the real nature of certain natural phenomena. They who were in good faith either blindly believed in the divine nature of the origin of the phenomenon or in the message of all phenomena that seemed apocalyptic. Maybe they were so frightened by what they saw that they considered it a warning coming from God. They passed over their analytical power, that possibly might have led them to other conclusions. It seemed fair to us to make the comment that manipulations also take place on the basis of good intentions. When somebody does not know the true meaning of a strange phenomenon, but sells it to the nation as a token from heaven, in the justified assumption that very many people will consider it a divine sign and will reconsider their actions, then this is a well-intentioned form of manipulation. That somebody uses the strange event in bad faith need not yet mean that he is informed about the true nature of the phenomenon. It is self-evident that when the years go by it requires more and more effort to discover what exactly has been seen.

### *indirect marks of alliance*

Taking our departure from the hypothesis that many nations have a recollection of highly developed civilizations, one must come to the conclusion that the nature of the visitors - besides the influence that they have exercised in a positive or negative sense and besides the instructions that they have left - determined the direction into which myths and rituals developed. The regulations that have been left by strangers, may have been subject to misinterpretation. This may explain how enigmatic cults come into existence. The massive slaughtering of people in a ritual manner by the Aztecs out of fear that the sun might disappear, is such an enigmatic event. It is hardly conceivable that any people would tolerate such a ritual without valid reasons. In normal circumstances the introduction of it should meet with great resistance, unless the understanding of the cult was enforced for a long period of time, or had been clear for everybody from the beginning. We cannot reconstruct the way of thinking of the Aztecs, but it

may be, that in this field they were influenced by other civilizations from a time preceding theirs. In a remote past developed beings may have set foot on the Aztec or the surrounding terrain with the purpose of bringing knowledge or carrying out a study. They remained among the population for some time, performed many miracles and thereafter departed. Has the left behind population misinterpreted a number of their operations? Did one in the circle of priests and magi come to the conclusion that an indication incorporated in the messages of the strangers had to be followed? The undercurrent is the fear that one will be destroyed when one does not execute certain actions. That fear must come from somewhere.

Through the years an action may be performed in exactly the same way, although its actual meaning, among other things by symbolizing, gets partly lost. The lost part time and again, consciously or unconsciously, is supplemented by the imagination, to remain giving a justification for continuing the action. Another possibility is, that the meaning is kept exactly as it was, through a group of initiates who with good or bad intentions use their power. Through this the secret knowledge remains to exist, unmodified by the nation. The nation carries out what the priesthood commissions. A blending of both situations is conceivable. The ritual in the long term on the part of the people is given a plausible explanation that in abstracto approaches the real meaning of the ritual, whereby the explanation still does not take into account the consciousness of those who really understand how the ritual has come into existence. Let us look at this on the basis of an example. An Occidental sets foot in a jungle and wears a weapon with the shape of a lance. This weapon must be oiled regularly. The inhabitants of the jungle, who never have had to deal with technical appliances and who observe him through the daily cleaning procedure, remember - whether or not instructed by him - that the object can kill but must be oiled every day if it is not to lose its activity. After the departure of the visitor the natives imitate the weapon. After some time or after some generations the interpretation of the event might look like this:

- a) Do not touch the object, at least do not have this done by an uninitiate, for it is deadly in incompetent hands.
- b) The object must be cleaned daily.
- c) If cleansing is refrained from, something goes wrong.

The latter can be understood in several ways. One can understand by it that the object no longer functions and loses the power that is present in it, or that something goes wrong with the user or his people. Especially because the danger has not been defined well, people are going to speculate about it. Maybe that with the passage of time the ritual is expanded by an initiate, who only with gloves on dares to take a hold of the object henceforth, so that he remains preserved from the unknown danger (death, contamination or injury).

The gloves in their turn become part of the paraphernalia of the ritual. This means that with the best of intentions from the side of the initiate yet a veil has fallen over the meaning of the ritual object. After years a similar obfuscating may occur again, with which the chance for recognition of the initial stages diminishes in each case. One thing will remain at the centre stage and remain recognizable as such: that the use of the ritual object carries a great risk and that the object originates from the gods. The details become faded, but an abstract core remains preserved.

*intentional marks of alliance*

It speaks for itself that a strange visitor at his departure is pursued by the supplications of the indigines. When his stay has meant anything at all for the nation, the people will beseech him to return, heap gifts upon him and preferably ask a token of affection in return. To be rid of all the insisting, a visitor comes to making a promise that he cannot always keep. When it has been his aim to give a culture new impulses, he may already during his stay have given the people instructions about their conduct after his departure. The promise to come back, possibly supplemented with the demand that the tribe follows certain regulations, may more or less be part of the programme of the visitor. He knows that otherwise his education will come to nothing. Of his own accord he can give a mark of alliance or make such a sign upon request. In 1639 the Indians who had seen how an expedition went up the Amazone and in one piece passed many belligerent tribes and returned again, by way of thanks for their hospitality wanted to have one of the powerful white gods.<sup>41</sup> From this we see that the Indians, very much impressed by their guests, supposed that these were gods. The Indians attributed the knowledge and technology that they could not understand, to the protection enjoyed by a deity. The commanders of the expedition were on the horns of a dilemma. They contemplated to give the Indians a cross, but through the abuse that the Portuguese had made of it and because of the atrocities that the latter had perpetrated in the name of the Christian cross the commanders were impelled to abandon this resolution.

All marks of alliance can depict principles, ideals or knowledge, no matter whether the marks have been practical objects or have no more than symbolical value. A mark of alliance with some great leader intends to permanently remind the population of its assignment and tie with the leader. Besides marks of alliance that have been developed by the abandoned people itself, there are marks that are introduced at the instigation of the gods or which are imposed or stimulated by them. The proposition to introduce that symbolical deed may come from the side of the seniors among the nation, after they have been incited to this by the strange leaders. The psychological consequence is considerable of course, especially amongst a nation that stands at the beginning of its cultural development and suddenly is confronted with beings that demonstrate many skills. Through a mark of alliance one feels joined together, knighted as it were. Even somewhat family of, and identified with, the leaders. Insight in the human constitution may incite the strangers to introduce marks. They are fixed in the environment or the daily customs of the people. In addition to this the myths speak of marks of alliance that are anchored on or in the body.

#### *cranial and ear deformation*

Many kinds of physical deformations that have come about through man, seem to be marks of alliance originally and result from tradition. Actually this tradition is a sequence of rites that can make themselves felt in society as a whole. An example of a rite that appeals to the imagination is cranial deformation. We find this custom with uncounted Indian tribes in America, with tribes in Africa and it even seems to have been found with the priests of ancient Egypt. The wish to marry into the pantheon may explain why certain peoples have started deforming the skull. There must have been a cause for the instituting of this particular custom, that implied that the skulls of young children were given a different appearance. The flattening or deforming is explained in all kinds of ways by the nations involved. It are secondary explanations, because the real causes are no longer known. The colonists who for the first time were confronted with this curious practice were presented differing arguments. Deformation would among other

things embellish the skull, influence the mind or give a manful appearance. One thing is certain, which is that the deformation cult has penetrated on a large scale all kinds of peoples in large parts of the world, in Europe as well. It has been spread far and wide, and as a phenomenon the aberrant cranial form is very old. Both in the Honan mountain range and on an island in Tungting Lake petroglyphs were found of beings with a pointed head. Their estimated age amounts to 47.000 years.<sup>42</sup> It is uncertain whether these beings had a pointed head by nature or obtained it through deformation. That the practice of cranial deformation is extremely old, does not explain why it has sustained so long. One can attribute it to the exertions of a group of initiates or of a whole population. It is not clear to what extent the deforming has arisen spontaneously or as the result of contacts with beings with an anomalous cranial form. It is conceivable that persons who had a pointed head by nature, appeared in the said area and as to anatomy for the most part looked like the autochthonous human being. They may have deviated from him in detail, as to their cranial form for instance. The discovered depictions and statuettes of deformed skulls may have been made by zealous followers, who started imitating a specific bodily characteristic of the visitors because of the great influence that these exercised, or because of the alleged magical powers or psychological, social or technical ascendancy of these visitors. Did one through imitation and identification intend to assume some of their power and become equal to the gods? These days the reminiscence of any possible doctrines of such visitors is totally dimmed. The purpose of the deformation is likewise shrouded in mystery. That the shape of the skull was changed via several techniques, which gave mutually deviating results, does in no way exclude that a common cause has underlain this phenomenon. From the fact that prehistoric depictions of pointed skulls have been found, it can not be inferred if the depicted persons are faithful renderings of natives who had a cranial shape that was aberrant by nature and at the same time was highly appreciated. The depictions may equally well represent strange visitors. In that case the depictions are made at a moment that the visitors temporarily or permanently were wrapped in the traditional costume of the region where they sojourned a while, for the personages are depicted in such attire. It may also be that only for the purpose of the composition the visitors were portrayed in local costumes, without these actually having been worn by them. This would be an inverse form of imitation, by instead of putting oneself on a par with the gods and achieving this by imitation, on the other hand depicting the gods as people from the own region. Were the portrayed heads the result of an artificial intervention or was the shape of the head a wholly natural one, belonging to a race that differed from those that we know? When there has been an earthly race with a cranial shape that differed from that of the other earth dwellers, one should be able to find traces thereof. The skulls with aberrant dimensions have all been found in regions that were inhabited by humans with a normal skull. Their age does not differ either. The found skulls may show a congenital defect or an artificial intervention among the autochthonous population, but also be the congenital characteristic of an allochthonous race, or an artificial intervention that this race carried out with itself. Should the local population have introduced the artificial intervention on the basis of an example of visitors, then in the region mortal remains might have been found of this visiting race. But when these are there, can they be distinguished from the artificially deformed human beings of the local population? The fact that the described depictions on the rock faces are so old, leads one to suspect that pointed or flattened skulls that have been found more recently, have been deformed on the basis of a knowledge handed down since time immemorial. About the purpose of the deformation there is much diversity of opinion among both experts and autochthons. Certain Indians told that seen from the front it gave a bold and manly appearance. Catlin denied on the basis of his own observations the correctness of that Indian motivation. The scholar Franklin Ewing presumed that the flattened skull was a fortuitous result of a certain position of the child in the cradle, and that this effect later found favour and was encouraged.<sup>43</sup> Also Louis Baudin,

with some restriction, considered the deforming to be an esthetical intervention. He puts that the custom extremely well matched with the standards of a civilization that did not shrink from setting on the individual the ineradicable stamp of collectivity. According to Baudin it is even possible that some amautas<sup>1</sup> with a high intelligence wanted to go even further and with this means have tried to compress convolutions of the brain, to create people with a certain mentality. The Indian chronicler Salcamayhua asserts, that the Inca applied this technique to obtain obedient subjects. This would indeed be the logical destination of the rational policy: the manufacturing of slaves, says Baudin.<sup>44</sup>

The Indian perception however does not provide an explanation about the question how far the amautas could come up with the idea that cranial deformation could result in a change in attitude. From investigations from our time it appears, that no difference as to aptitude or character is found between those with a normal skull and those whose skull was deformed. So deformations among the Incas cannot have resulted in a change of mentality, but then there was no point in continuing with the deformation practices. It therefore seems that the Inca to the outsiders motivated the custom by relating it to an intended change of mentality, whereas in reality he did not hold this idea at all. In secret circles of priests the custom might be founded on imitating the preceptors who lived in earlier times. Another explanation is possible. The idea that the state of mind of man undergoes a change after the deforming of his skull, may have arisen from the notion that the highly developed preceptors owed their knowledge and insight to the special shape of their skull. That this change did not actually occur, may have been repressed from the mind. It remains obscure why the procedure, when a positive change in mentality took place, was not reserved for the highest circles, the nobility and the priesthood. Baudin's opinion implies, that changing the cranial form can be rewarded with a negative result; as it is, he puts that deformation would lead to meekness. On the other hand there was no need to generate nationals that were more docile than already obtained through the social and political system. The high ranks too practised deformation. When this led to slavish obedience we fail to see why one undermined one's own position of power. After all it would have been much wiser to force the people to cranial deformation, and remain unchanged oneself, that is, powerful. Catlin, speaking about the custom of deformation, says:

"By this remarkable operation, the brain is singularly changed from its natural shape; but in all probability, not in the least diminished or injured in its natural functions. This belief is drawn from the testimony of many credible witnesses, who have closely scrutinized them; and ascertained that those who have the head flattened, are in no way inferior in intellectual powers to those whose heads are in their natural shapes.<sup>45</sup>"

So here we find a contradiction with the Indian chronicler Salcamayhua, who thought that it was an Inca method to obtain obedient subjects, whereas Catlin's sources indicated that the brain remained uninfluenced. Cranial deformation seems to be a hallmark of noble birth. Why this is the case is inexplicable, unless we relate the custom to a leadership that through its nature was so special that it induced to physical imitation. In cultural anthropology many examples are known of traditions with which the human body is deformed or mutilated. With one tribe the woman has her neck elongated by means of metal rings which as to their number time and again are increased. With other tribes one acquires saucerlips or stretches one's earlobes. In China one had the feet of girls laced up at their very early age. Such interventions are performed to

---

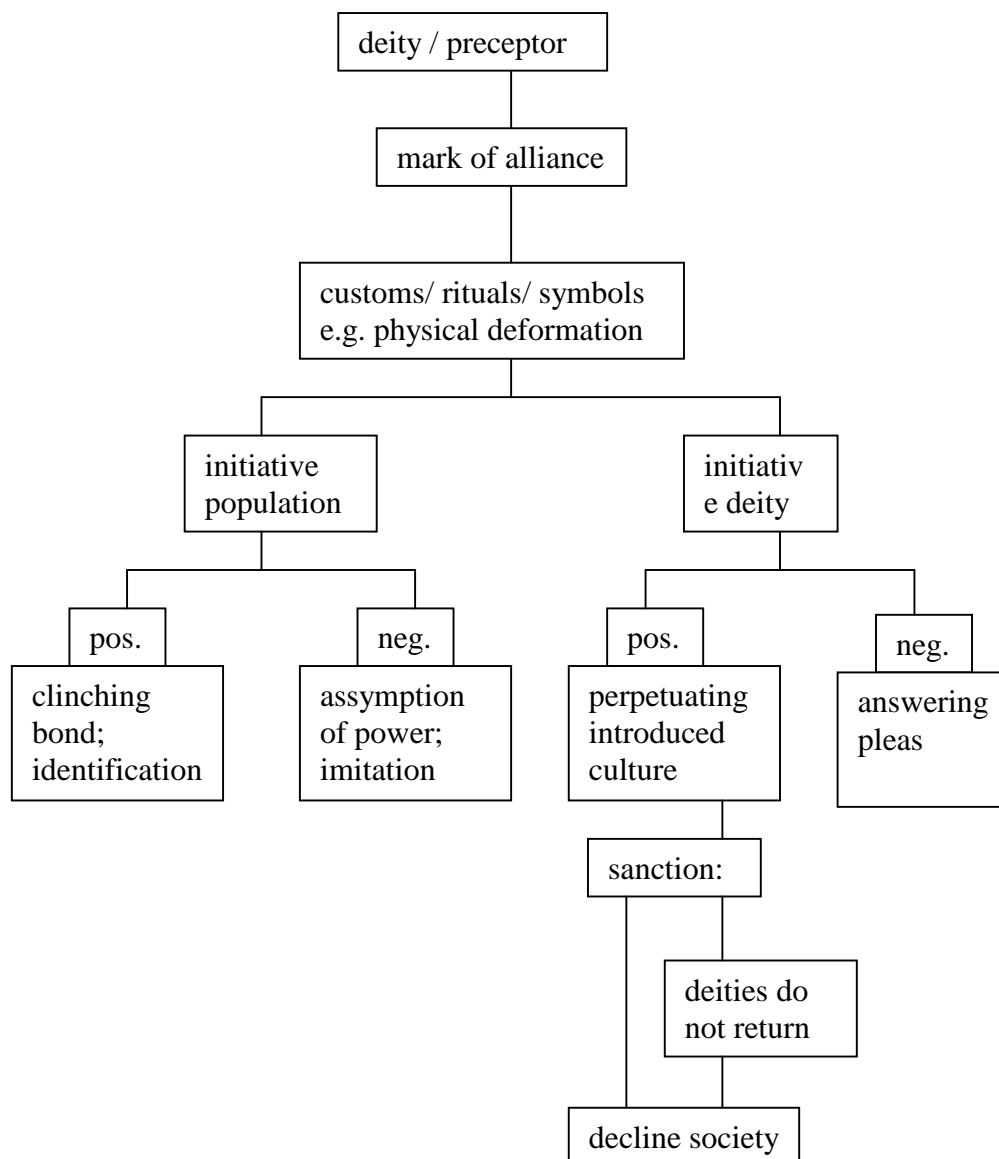
<sup>1</sup> famous sages among the Incas

embellish the body, or as the continuation of old, ritual traditions with a much deeper background. Deforming parts of the body can be a magical method to keep in touch with the gods who once have departed. In mythology the cause of one of these bodily interventions, ear deformation, is touched upon no more than fragmentarily, which explains that the experts hold differing opinions about its true character. The custom may have come into being spontaneously, but there are indications that ear deformation, just like cranial deformation, was a means to keep alive the memory of far ancestors or teachers. At the onset the custom may have been introduced in small groups of initiates for the making permanent of a doctrine, or to seal the deference that comes to the teacher for his help with developing the culture of the people. It may also have been a measure introduced by such a teacher for the whole nation. The report that Montesino made about 1550 as a result of his talks with Orejones (big-ears) and with Cayu Tupac, is exemplary. In a time of mutual slaughter amongst the races in the region of the Orejones, three men and some women appeared. One of the men, Ayar Cachi, came winged to his earthly protégés and imparted them that they should not entertain anxieties towards him. He told the Indians that he wanted to be their intercession with god. Furthermore:

"I shall remain in the form and fashion that you will see on a hill not distant from here and will be for you and your descendants a place of sanctity and worship, and its name shall be Huanacauri. And in return for the good things which you will have received from me I pray that you will always adore me as god and set up altars in that place at which to offer sacrifices. If you do this, you shall receive help from me in war; and as a sign that from henceforward you are to be esteemed, honoured and feared your ears shall be bored in the manner that you now behold in mine.<sup>46</sup>"

The coming into being of marks of alliance can be represented systematically, as follows:

*root of mark of alliance*

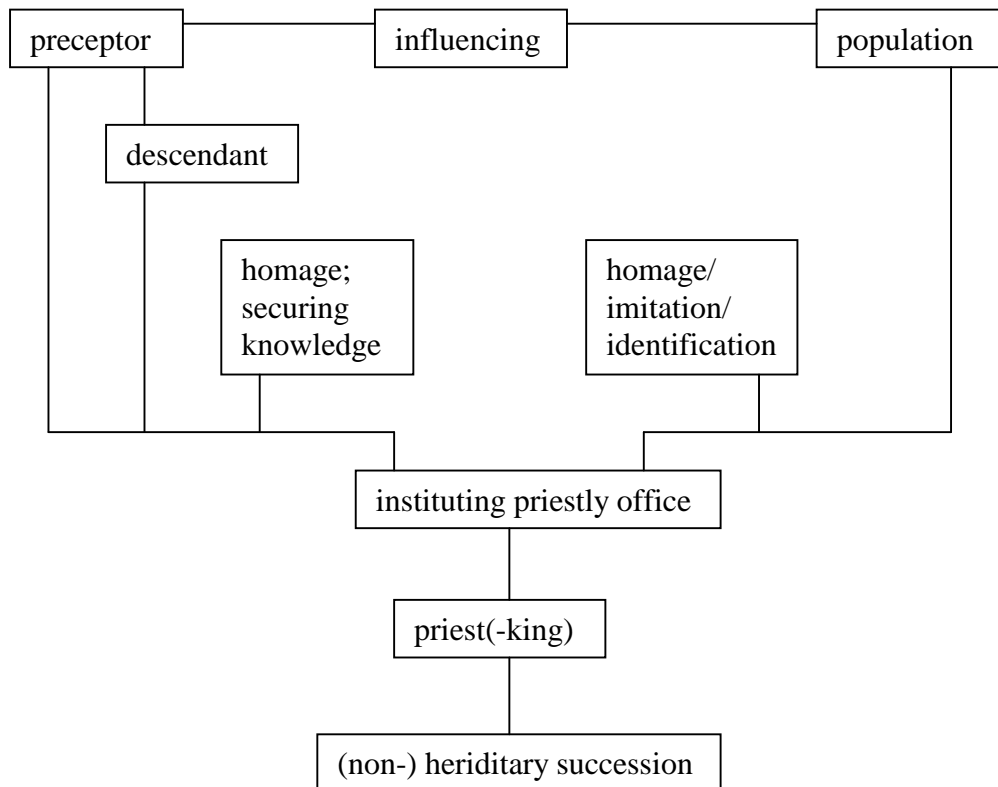


*the instituting of clerical positions*

A mark of alliance does not always have to be of a material nature in the sense of connected to an object. A preceptor who wants to seal the bond between him and his people has several means to embark upon this. For instance he gives some members of the people a mandate, in the form of an appointment as a trusted representative or as a priest. The mandate concerns the continuing of the doctrines or cultural lessons of the teacher, on his behalf. The instituting of a clerical position is an effective means for the deity to be able to have his plans executed with authority and drive. Clerical groups that he establishes in honour of himself, or in memory of himself, and that possibly consist of his children who do not fill their function in celibacy, may provide descendants-priests. The latter reflect, possibly of the blood, their grand ancestor and continue his work. The deity or his progeny can themselves furnish priests, but they can also recruit priests among the autochthonous population. Turning it round the autochthons can put in efforts to institute a priestly office and to furnish priests themselves, or ask the godhead or his progeny if they want to have themselves ordained to priests. When a preceptor leaves behind descendants, it is difficult to assess whether they who claim to be his descendants do this rightfully. A direct descent is difficult to demonstrate after a long time. The priestly office may have been instituted during the visit or after the departure of the preceptor, or after his dying. The priests who are entrusted with the continuation of the work can bear his name, certainly when it concerns real descendants of the deity. One can imagine that the revering of a hero of unknown inception can become a form of religion, and that eventually in the national spirit the institutions of purveyor of culture, priesthood and ruler- or kingship develop side by side. With that, the establishing of a clerical position in memory of the purveyor of culture, as well as the ordaining to priests of a number of people, the transformation of a visitor into a godlike being and the bestowing of secular, royal power on his descendants, logically happen in succession. Thus with the lapse of time a group of people with great power and influence arises. They embody or establish a class of rulers and then leave behind rulers. The people deify them. Through this they live on in the afterwards coming houses of rulers, which are deemed to be divine. Special appellations are given to the mortal, human and earthly rulers, to whom divine qualities are attributed that originally were only found with the teachers. More and more acts of wars and of heroism are attributed to the successive rulers and warriors, which makes it well-nigh impossible to find out who and what their forerunners were. This is what we see with a divine figure like Quetzalcoátl. In him and in some other mythological deities a total combined action is found of identifications and functions, in this case of the role as a purveyor of culture, warrior, priest and godhead, each time under the name of Quetzalcóatl.



*instituting of priesthood*



## POSTSCRIPT

In the preceding chapters we have seen that symbols can lose their original meaning, through which after a long time one cannot always recognize them anymore. Their nature shifts, from a material to a psychical, or from a psychical to a material function. Sometimes a symbol keeps its original psychical or material function, which in itself changes its nature. A symbol, like a drawing, an image, a myth or a ritual, does not always have a profound meaning. Superficial or common feelings, next to stronger emotions like consternation, joy and grief, fear and pain, can figure in it. Not only feelings and emotions are thus expressed, but also the deeper stirrings and the psychical and archetypical images follow this line, beside the strong outward, sensory impulses. It starts with us becoming aware of these impulses. Then we take them to the surface and establish them in a symbol. They are then in a form that we control. So the stipulation is, that we find an effective way to translate the essential things that we, in ourselves, become aware of. After this the whether or not revised symbol is again absorbed in our mind via the way of contemplation, with which the cycle of realization, expression, transformation and reflection has been completed. The releasing of the experiences from our own person, the moving to the objective world of what we inwardly perceive, to the world of the necessarily symbolical expression, is followed by the need or the necessity to integrate all this again, and to incorporate it and give it a meaningful place in life. But to the original point of departure one never returns. Reflection brings insight, but it bifurcates into new impulses and leads to other symbols. Modern man has not outgrown symbolical, ritual and mythical thinking. Matters which have a deep, symbolical background are disposed of as a very usual thing, but in reality are an ingrained constituent of our culture. In many situations we conform to existing symbolical customs unless we are, according to the common opinion, uncivilized, therefore untraditional, people. That we have a general notion of certain standards and values, which are rooted in the past and are maintained, specifically seems to be a token of civilization. Even if we do not always recognize their source anymore and even if they appear to us obfuscated. A second hallmark of civilization is the ability to test standards, values and other cultural attainments - among which symbols and narratives about human history - by the benefit that they offer us on a material, psychical and ethical level. With that it seems that reality itself, so the actual circumstances of events that have reached us from the past, can be subservient to a higher purpose: that we undergo the beauty that lies in reflection. But reflection alone would restrict us too much and is not the objective, no more than the dry study of facts is. Studying the facts, together with the acquiring of the insights that we make ourselves familiar with through research, and through considering and revaluing those facts, forms a harmonic unity. A unity of the human mind that always tries to receive answers to questions that it creates itself.

## QUOTATION OF SOURCES (see Endnotes)

North American Indian Mythology, 1973, Cottie Burland, Hamlyn Publishing Group Ltd., Middlesex.

Zo leefden de Inca's voor de ondergang van hun rijk, Louis Baudin, 1958, Hollandia N.V., Baarn.

A pictorial History of Magic and the supernatural, Maurice Bessy, 1961, Spring Books, Hamlyn Publishing Group Ltd., London.

Ancient Arts of the Americas, 1967, G.H.S. Bushnell, Thames and Hudson, London.

De eerste Amerikanen, 1969, Dr. G.H.S. Bushnell, Elsevier, Amsterdam.

Manners, customs and condition of the North American Indians, 1845, Geo. Catlin, Vol. I, 5e ed., Henry G. Bohn, London.

Manners, customs and condition of the North American Indians, 1845, Geo. Catlin, Vol. II, 5e ed., Henry G. Bohn, London.

Schatkamer der Archeologie, 1967, C.W. Ceram, Van Ditmar, Amsterdam.

Aztecas del Norte, The Chicanos of Aztlán, 1973, Jack D. Forbes, Fawcett Publications Inc., Connecticut.

Mijn leven onder de Eskimo's, Peter Freuchen, 1967, N.V. de Arbeiderspers, Amsterdam.

Indian Mythology, 1973, Veronica Ions, The Hamlyn Publishing Group Ltd., London.

Het Boek van den Hemel, after 1927, before 1935, John Kooy, W. de Haan, Utrecht.

The Broken Spears, the Aztec Account of the Conquest of Mexico, 1962, Miguel Leon-Portilla, Constable and Co. Ltd., London.

Expeditions into the Valley of the Amazons, 1539, 1540, 1639, edition/translation Clements R. Markham, The Hakluyt Society, reprint Burt Franklin Publisher, New York.

South American Mythology, 1975, Harold Osborne, The Hamlyn Publishing Group Ltd., London.

British Guiana Archeology to 1945, Yale University Publications of Anthropology number 36, 1946, Cornelius Osgood, London Geoffrey Cumberlege (+ drawing of petroglyphs).

De Dageraad der Magiërs, Louis Pauwels & Jacques Bergier, 1971, De Bezige Bij, Amsterdam.

The Children of the Sun, A Study in the Early History of Civilization, 1923, W.J. Perry, Methuen & Co. Ltd., London.

Bible, King James Version, 1604.

Echo der Liefde, bimonthly, no. 7, October 1977, ed. Kerk in Nood/Oostpriesterhulp, Internationale Informatiedienst, article W. van Straaten, Tongerlo 3180 Westerlo.

P. Stahl, member of the American Astronomical Society.

Oceanic Mythology, the myths of Polynesia, Micronesia, Melanesia, Australia, Roslyn Poignant, 1967, Hamlyn Publishing Group Ltd. London, London.

Sesam Kunstgeschiedenis part 14, article professor Dr. P. Westheim, 1962, editors Dr. E.T. Rimli and K. Fischer, Bosch & Keuning N.V., Baarn.

Ancient Voyagers in Polynesia, 1964, Andrew Sharp, University of California Press, Berkeley.

Voorspellingen - oude en nieuwe, tot aan het jaar 2050, 1974, Jules Silver, H. Meulenhoff, Baarn.

Mythen en Legendes der Noordamerikaanse Indianen, Lewis Spence F.R.A.I., 1928, Thieme & Cie, Zutphen.

De Mythen van Mexico en Peru, Lewis Spence, W.J. Thieme & Cie, Zutphen.

Drawings of Jo Spier, year unknown, Atlas Reeks, co-production of Becht, Bruna, Van Holkema, Sijthoff and Stok.

Atlantis, raadsel van een verdwenen continent, 1972, Andrew Tomas, Kluwer, Deventer.

The Angami Nagas, with some notes on neighbouring tribes, 1969, J.H. Hutton, 2nd edition London, Oxford University Press.

Ufo's in Oost en West, 1971, part I, J. Weverbergh, Kluwer, Deventer.

Hyperbrachycephaly as influenced by cultural conditioning, 1950, J. Franklin Ewing S.J., Papers of the Peabody Museum of American Ethnology, Harvard University Vol. XXIII, no. 2, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

## ENDNOTES

1. Kooy
2. Westheim
3. Hutton
4. Sharp
5. Silver
6. Silver
7. Catlin Vol. I
8. Bushnell - De eerste Amerikanen
9. Bushnell - Ancient Arts of the Americas
10. Ceram
11. Freuchen
12. Freuchen
13. Burland
14. Osborne
15. Forbes
16. Spier
17. Freuchen
18. Freuchen
19. The Bible
20. Spence - Mythen en Legendes der Noordam. Indianen
21. Bessy
22. Pauwels & Bergier
23. Weverbergh
24. Leon-Portilla
25. Spence - Mythen en Legendes der Noordam. Indianen
26. Poignant
27. Leon-Portilla
28. Perry
29. The Bible
30. Spence - Mythen en Legendes der Noordam. Indianen
31. Spence - Mythen en Legendes der Noordam. Indianen
32. Tomas
33. Ions
34. Yale University Publications
35. Osgood
36. Osborne
37. Spence - de Mythen van Mexico en Peru
38. Catlin - Vol. II
39. Van Straaten
40. Stahl
41. Markham
42. Tomas
43. Ewing
44. Baudin
45. Catlin - Vol. II
46. Osborne